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AT THE LIBRARY TABLE

BY

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Author of

“Meditations of an Autograph Collector”

“The Diversions of a Book Lover”

&c.



BOSTON

RICHARD G. BADGER

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PREPARATORY NOTE

THREE of the papers in this volume have been privately printed. I have added, however, some new matter to the sketches of Ainsworth and James; and it has been suggested to me that those sketches should be published, although I have some misgivings about them. The other paper I am reprinting merely to please myself. Two men have confided to me that they have read it, and possibly two more may be persuaded to do the same thing.

November, 1909.

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AT THE LIBRARY TABLE

WHETHER there are many who take much interest in books about books is a matter of doubt. Multitudes of people like to think that they are fond of books merely as books, and derive great comfort from the innocent delusion that they delight in the possession of them. A neat and imposing library is an attractive ornament of the country house as well as of the city mansion, and if the volumes are bound in a becoming fashion, by Zaehnsdorf, Rivière, Lortic, or Cobden-Sanderson, they look well on the shelves and impart to the establishment an air of dignity and refinement. But it is a portentous question whether the majority of book-owners ever find occasion or opportunity to inquire within or to inform themselves about the contents of the tomes which line the walls of the comfortable library. The toilers who are absorbed in the drudgery of daily work have little leisure to expend on the inside of their books, and the merry idlers who devote their energies to sports, athletic or otherwise, amusements, and the varied diversions which occupy the minds of the members of our modern "society", have still less. My dear friend, the average man, deserving as he is of admiration and respect, cannot have much interest in books which are purely bookish, and my dearer friend, the average woman, who now and again plunges calmly but despairingly into the depths of "literature",—combining with others of her kind in so-called reading clubs, so as to share her afflictions

with her fellows—secretly longs for the sweets of fiction while she pretends to be fond of such stupid performances as essays and dissertations. In the recesses of her personality she regards works of that description as bores to be avoided; and very likely she is not far wrong.

Mind, I am not talking of inhabitants of Boston, Massachusetts. It may be that my notions are derived wholly from my New York environment. A New Yorker appears to think that it is an evidence of weakness to allow any one to find out that books are dear to him, and seems to be as loath to confess the passion as he would be to proclaim at the club or upon the house-tops his fond attachment to the lady of his choice. In the goodly number of years during which I have trodden the pavements and availed of the facilities of transit afforded by the street-railways of the city whereof we are justly proud, I do not remember hearing the subject of books or of things pertaining to books discussed or even referred to by any of my neighbors. But recently in Boston, while walking on Boylston Street, I passed two lads who were still in their later teens, and distinctly heard one of them say, "the Latin derivation of that word is"—I lost the rest of it. In New York he would have been uttering something in the vulgar argot used by the youth of our times,—preserved and fostered by the newspaper—about "de cops" or "de Giants", or the superiority of some novel brand of cigarettes. They would have blushed for shame to be discovered in the possession of any knowledge of such discreditable matters as "Latin" or "derivations" of any description. The gospel of "doing things" has been preached to them so strenuously that they have long since forgotten, if they ever knew, that there is any virtue in "knowing things".

Sitting at the library table and letting my eyes wander with affection to the adjacent shelves, I try to fancy who buys the multitudinous books of memoirs and reminiscences, of literary, dramatic and political gossip, which are poured forth so profusely from the English presses. Now and then I encounter their titles in seductive catalogues and purchase them at large reductions from the original prices—"published at £3 10s and marked down to 7s 6d." We have nothing quite like them in these United States, or very little, because they do not "pay", as the phrase runs. I wonder whether these English books "pay" in England, but I am inclined to think that they must, for publishers are not usually actuated by motives of pure philanthropy; they do not print for pleasure only or for personal gratification in bringing out the screeds of ambitious authors. I like those English books; their type is large and legible; the paper has a substantial mellowness; and the simple bindings are well-fitted to be torn off and replaced by real bindings. They have the merit of what may be called "skippability", for the writers are sadly given to deplorable diffuseness and degenerate frequently into tediousness for which I love them, as a fellow-sinner. They convey impressions of abundant leisure and unlimited vocabulary. Does an author ever become conscious that he is growing tedious? If he does, how he must revel in the thought that, despite his tediousness, some daring explorer will toil through his pages, and that in some library at least, be it that of the British Museum or of our own Congress, his book will stand triumphantly upon the shelves in the company of Lord Avebury's One Hundred.

I do not believe that an ordinary American, at least in these days, would dream of publishing such a book

as "Gossip From Paris", the correspondence (1864-1869) of Anthony B. North Peat, which the Kegan Paul house brought out a few years ago. Some one may say that an American could not, and I will not deny the charge if it is made. North Peat, whose name sounds like that of a station on the Grand Trunk Railway, was not by any means a famous person, but he was a clever and an observant journalist and there is much of interest in the volume mingled with much that is of no present interest whatever. One passage has given me comfort, because it contains something rarely encountered—a good word for the collector of autographs. Usually when an author is feeling a little rancor about life generally, he will go far out of his way to kick an autograph collector. I purr slightly when I quote what North Peat wrote in September, 1866.

"I know one man in Paris who has an extensive library composed exclusively of works in one volume and of the same folio; but, perhaps, among the manifold phases of the collecting mania none is more excusable than that of gathering autographs. * * * To read over the names and the tariff at which signatures or letters are quoted gives a most curious insight into the place held in public opinion by the generals, diplomatists, poets, literary men, composers, and even criminals whose handwritings are eagerly sought for by amateurs. Last month the prices ran thus: George Sand, 6f.; Seward, 10f.; Jefferson Davis, 15f.; Duke of Morny, 4f. 50c.; Michelet, 1f. 75c.; McClellan, 20f.; Verdi, 3f. 50c.; Prévost Paradol, 2f. 50c.; Champfleury, 2f. Gerard de Nerval is quoted 20f., thanks to a note attached to the letter, 'correspondance amoureuse très passionnée.' A copybook of the King of Rome is quoted 20f. Rénan, the sceptic author of *La Vie de Jésus*, keeps up in the market, and goes for

10*l.* A letter of Henri Latouche is to be sold for 2*l.* 50*s.*; it contains the following curious passage: 'The only souvenirs of my literary life to which I look back with pride are, having edited *André Chénier* and having deterred George Sand from devoting her talents to water-colour drawing.' A letter of Louis XVI is quoted at 2*l.* 50*s.*, by which the King grants a sum of 2400*l.* (£100) to 'La Dame Rousseau, cradle-rocker to the children of France'."

I have quoted thus at length not only because of my pride in the compliment to autograph collectors but because the prices mentioned must bring a pang to the hearts of those who buy now-a-days and pay more than ten times as much for George Sands, Verdis, and Louis XVI*s.* I can imagine the sensations of a dealer of to-day if some innocent should offer fifty cents for that Louis XVI document—I am confident that it was not a letter. Mr. North Peat has overlooked the fact, as is common with those who do not belong to the inner brotherhood, that contents are of much consequence in establishing the market value of autograph letters, but his figures are not without significance. Some of us are glad to observe that even in 1866 McClellan's autograph "fetched" twice as much as Seward's and six times as much as Verdi's.

Very unlike the reasonable remarks of North Peat is the autographic deliverance of that once celebrated "educator", Mr. Horace Mann. This gem of wisdom, given to me by a Boston friend in a malicious spirit of kindly generosity, is lying on the library table. It reads thus:—

"I would rather perform one useful act for my fellow men than to be the possessor of all the autographs in the world.

HORACE MANN.

"West Newton, April 23, '50."

It is an excellent specimen of the smug self-satisfaction, the Chadbandian cant, the affectation of altruism which marked the middle of the nineteenth century, particularly in the regions lying about West Newton. Cheap enough withal it seems to be, for as he could never by any chance become "the possessor of all the autographs in the world", his expression of preference signifies nothing whatever. The formula is simple enough. Select something which sounds noble and unselfish and then say that you would rather do that thing than to have—all the diamonds, all the pictures, all the Caxtons, all the gold mines, all the puppy-dogs and all the tabby-cats in the universe. It is in contemporaneous vernacular, a safe "bluff". If he had said that he would rather perform one useful act for his fellow men than to be the owner of a hundred shares of Standard Oil, it would have had some meaning, for one could then measure the precise extent of his devotion to the welfare of mankind. One may naturally inquire, why not have all the autographs in the world and do not one but many useful acts for one's fellow men? There is no inherent incompatibility between the two ideas.

It may be suggested that the subject of books about books and the gathering of autographs are not cognate; that they have no relation to each other; that they are illegally joined together in defiance of the laws laid down in Day's Praxis. I knew a dignified New England author, lawyer and soldier who was accustomed, when assailed by a proposition to which he did not assent, but which he was too polite to dispute, to close discussion by the sententious remark, "That indeed". I never fully understood precisely what it meant, but it seemed to be conclusive for there was no

more to be said. It was like some of the cryptic utterances of that model of concise expression, Mr. F's aunt. But I maintain that the man who truly covets autographs, covets books likewise for the sake of the books themselves, irrespective of style or contents. It may be one of Mr. Crother's One Hundred Worst Books, but all the more precious for that very reason. My point is easily demonstrated by a logical device not uncommonly adopted by those who manufacture our opinions for us in the public press. The man who—to continue the locution of Mr. Joseph Surface—does not feel a fondness for books of the bookish sort, derives no gratification from the ownership of autographs. I am not referring to the pseudo-collector with his album or to the encourager of profanity who besets the living great with requests for his signature. I allude, sir, as General Cyrus Choke said in regard to the British lion, to him who finds a charm in written words penned by the hand of a warrior, a statesman, or a scholar. It is a charm that may not be defined, for when you venture upon a definition it s' tly and suddenly vanishes away like the Baker who encountered the Snark that was a Boojum in the Carrollian fable.

I am not ashamed to acknowledge that there is something about the exterior of books which appeals to our warmest affections. We love to sit among them and enjoy the sight of them as many rejoice in the prospect of lake, valley and mountain. Dear old R. Wilfer in *Our Mutual Friend* had one darling wish, to possess at one time a complete new attire from boots to hat, but he never attained that glorious pinnacle. The late Sultan of Turkey, thirty years or more ago, had an enthusiasm for rifles, bought a lot of them at an

enormous cost, and constructed for the storage of these treasures a kind of mausoleum of rifles, a grand edifice in which the muskets were arranged in serried ranks radiating from a centre where, upon a throne, the potentate who called himself Abdul Hamid Khan Sani, Sultan and Sovereign of the Ottoman Empire, was accustomed to sit in solemn and solitary state while he gloated over his acquisitions. In like spirit I would exult if I could have a library room where I could see all the books at once, reviewing the beloved brigades and cheerfully foregoing the reading of them. To marshal the regiments of books, the well-uniformed battalions, the heavy artillery of the folios, the light skirmishers of the duodecimos, would bring a joy akin to that which the pompous and patriotic soldier, the vainest of men, Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, used to feel when, sitting on his charger, he reviewed the valiant little army which conquered Mexico over sixty years ago. This recalls to me that in the innocent hours of childhood I supposed that the head which Salome demanded was brought to King Herod on just such a charger as the General bestrode according to the veracious picture which hung over the sofa in the "back parlor", when I also firmly believed that the baskets in which the fragments were gathered after the miracle were the large, ordinary baskets used in our laundry.

Vain as he was, the old General was a good, sturdy warrior, and no one can read his egotistical memoirs without becoming aware of the fact, in spite of his enormous self-conceit. When King Edward VII visited us as Prince of Wales in 1860, I saw the royal youth on the parade-ground at West Point. I remember him well, for as A. Ward observed, "I seldom for-

git a person". But the General was the man I longed to gaze upon, and I regret that a facetious uncle easily persuaded me that the gorgeous drum-major who led the band was the Great Scott himself. The materiality of this reminiscence lies in the fact that a volume of Scott's *Memoirs* is usually to be found on the library table, a model of what an autobiography ought not to be. Soldiers in later days learned to write the story of their battles with more good taste and modesty. Perhaps General Benjamin F. Butler was an exception, but he was not a soldier, and his battles were very few; and those of us who loved and honored McClellan regret the publishing of his "Own Story", a deed he would never have countenanced. A man should never be judged by what he writes to his wife.

It would not be amiss if some fair-minded and competent person would give us a candid and impartial history of some of the men who have been dealt with unjustly by the merciless masses in this country. McClellan is one of these victims, although students of military affairs have begun to comprehend the truth about him; but the great majority still believe that he was a timid, dilatory and inefficient commander who quarrelled with his President without a cause. General Arthur St. Clair, of revolutionary times, was even a greater sufferer, and he has been so long dead that his record may be judged calmly. Aaron Burr has had several defenders, and it is now well established that whatever sins he may have committed, treason was not one of them. Martin Van Buren, sorely maligned by partisan historians, has been ably vindicated by Edward Morse Shepard. James K. Polk, Chief Justice Taney, and Andrew Johnson also deserve to be relieved from many of the aspersions which have been plentifully be-

stowed upon them. Unfortunately there is a tendency on the part of most men who undertake a work of that character to become advocates rather than judges, and to impair the influence of their arguments by an excess of ardor.

Most of us find that as the number of our years increases we are apt to pass more and more of our time at the library table, within easy reach of the shelves. I have been charged with believing that books are "the chief things in life"; I admit that they are not and ought not to be that, but I see no reason why we should not be allowed to enjoy them as we would any other innocent pleasure, in due moderation. A good many young people might as well be accused of believing that sports were the chief things in human existence; and both in England and in this country I apprehend that sports engross the attention of the multitude to the exclusion of such minor things as books; but I find no fault with them because they choose pleasures different from mine.

Youth is a pleasure in itself, but one may be allowed to have misgivings as to whether its joys are not in some degree overrated. Certainly our young people seem to work very hard to get their fun out of life, and after they have had it they do not appear to be much the better for it. We often sigh for our lost youth, and if we are lucky enough to be able to remember so much of our Horace, we whisper to ourselves "*Eheu fugaces*" and the rest of it, while if we were confronted by a decree that we must go over it all again, Latin included, we would beg for mercy, or, if we happened to be lawyers, ask for an adjournment. It is "a wise dispensation of Providence"—if one may be permitted to refer to

the mandates of Providence in that patronizing way—that the old have their pleasures too and that the boys and girls are not violating any congressional or legislative provisions against trusts by having a monopoly of enjoyment. Most of these pleasures are associated with books. Talleyrand's sad, whistless old age is of no moment when compared with a sad bookless old age.

The accusation that the lover of books cares more for them than he does about life and its varied problems, is as unjust as the complaint, preferred—semi-jocosely, it must be owned,—by that pertinacious bibliophile, Irving Browne, that “the book-worm does not care for nature”. He quotes the animal as saying:

“I feel no need of nature's flowers,—
Of flowers of rhetoric I have store;
I do not miss the balmy showers—
When books are dry I o'er them pore.

No need that I should take the trouble
To go abroad to walk or ride,
For I can sit at home and double
Quite up with pain from Akenside.”

The punster is such a derelict, such a scoffed-at sinner, that he may not be taken very seriously. Others than Browne however, have gravely reproached the devotee of the library for his alleged lack of affection for the outer world and its beauties. But the man who knows his Gilbert White of Selborne, and his John Burroughs of the Hudson, cannot be wholly outside the ranks of nature-lovers. We may be uttering a truism when we say that as we grow older we come closer to mother earth, and as we strike off more and more years from our calendar all the sweet things of earth are nearer to us and the trees, the flowers, the fields, and the wide

expanse of hill, river and valley take on a new meaning. A few days ago I "took a drive", if one may avail of that wretched colloquial form of words, to the hamlet of Bedminster, name suggestive of Axminster with its carpets and Westminster with its monuments, as far as the site of the old church which was ruthlessly and needlessly destroyed by iconoclasts within a year or two. It was a delightful autumn drive, the joy of it tempered by the abominable automobile which infests our New Jersey roads with its hoots and stinks and cloudy mantle of dust: and the bookish associations surely did not detract from the pleasure. There is a good picture of the church in Melick's "Story of an Old Farm", a book containing a mine of information about a neighborhood filled with associations of the Revolution. When you pass by the graveyard which still remains, you cannot help thinking of the young English officer, wounded and captured at Princeton, who died on the journey to Morristown and was buried in that field where his monument remains at this day. Melick's book is disorderly and needs condensing and arranging, but let no one tell me that the natural beauty of the country is lessened for me because I study it. It is one of those most often to be found on the library table in company with Ludwig Schumacher's pretty story of the "Somerset Hills".

Many of us may recall from our own experience examples of the peace and contentment, the grace and the dignity of book-lovers who have understood how to combine their pleasure with the active affairs of business. I remember affectionately one who had passed beyond the years of what Elisha Williams called "God Almighty's statute of limitations", and who went to his rest only a few months ago. Elbridge Goss, of Melrose, was a type of a New England gentleman, a man

of business as well as a lover of literature and of historical pursuits, fond of his books and autographs, all in a mild, modest and unobtrusive way; a gentle, admirable man, deserving of esteem and honor. There was no pretense about him; he had a delightful simplicity, a true catholicity of sentiment; there was no envy, hatred or malice in his composition. His "Life of Paul Revere" has long been known favorably, and his other works, chiefly historical, were no less meritorious. His was a full, useful and well-rounded life, and although his name may not be recorded among the famous, it will not be forgotten.

Some weeks before his death, he wrote to me thus: "As to your copy of Coleridge, has it the expunged verse from 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'? The genial Longfellow once picked up his copy from his centre-table and read it to me as follows:

'A gust of wind sterte up behind
And whistled thro' his bones,
Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
Half whistles and half groans.'

When Coleridge saw it in print, he took his pencil, crossed it off, and wrote in the margin, 'To be struck out. S. T. C.' It did not appear in subsequent editions." Coleridge did well to erase it for it is dangerously near to the ludicrous.

Whether the poet's later emendations of his published verses are always improvements is problematical. We have been surfeited of late with examples of Tennyson's amendments. He seems never to have been wholly satisfied with his work. In Buxton Forman's "Keat's Poetry and Prose", one may perceive that a

poet's changes while sometimes making the lines smoother, almost invariably weaken the effect. It is so with Byron. The first thought and image, coming fresh from the brain, are usually more vigorous and poetic than the sober second-thoughts, and alterations appear to enfeeble the expression. It is Doctor Johnson's "wit enough to keep it sweet" and the "putrefaction" amendment all over again. That, my friend who loves to ask "Why first editions?" is one of the reasons why.

The reference to Buxton Forman leads me to record an amusing bit of characteristic English newspaper wisdom. Some years ago in a book about autographs I ventured to make some remarks concerning Keats and Forman which drew down upon me the sneers of a London journal, the purport of which was that my observations were vulgar and peculiarly American. After I had recovered from the exaltation of spirit arising from being noticed at all by such an eminent authority, I permitted myself to indulge in justifiable mirth because it happened that I had stolen those very remarks from an old number of the London *Athenaeum* in which my Keats letter had been copied and described: but according to the well known custom of plagiarists, I had accidentally omitted the quotation marks. I inferred that an English assertion becomes vulgar only when it is repeated by a despicable Yankee. Never again will I be guilty of petit larceny.

This matter of quotations is often a troublesome one. I am sorry now that I left out those neat little commas. The orator has an unfair advantage over the writer, because he is not obliged to use them, and in common justice he should be required to give some sign that the eloquent sentences he borrows are not his own: he

might be compelled to hold up two fingers. A good, well rounded quotation is a great help when ideas grow so timid that they refuse to come at your call. I suppose that a lawyer who is asked to speak before assemblages, on some legal topic, almost always consults *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, where he finds little to aid him except that respectable old stand-by, "The seat of the law is the bosom of God; her voice, the harmony of the world". It sounds well and it makes a sonorous finale, besides giving the impression that the quoter is accustomed to occupy himself with the works of fine old authors: although it always seemed to me that when applied to what we call "the law" in these times, it is rather highly colored. A friend who was an admirer of the sentiment once carefully prepared an "address" to be delivered before the Maryland Bar Association, and had it printed in advance, lugging in the famous lines at the close of his peroration. To his horror, the learned President of the Association, who spoke immediately before him, and who evidently had a *Bartlett* of his own, closed an admirable speech with the same old "seat" and "bosom" story. There was nothing to be done but to pour it forth again upon the heads of those helpless Marylanders, on whom it must have had a "punch brothers" effect; but that man will never trot out the "harmony" yarn again unless he is sure that he is to have the first chance at it.

Mr. James Ford Rhodes in an entertaining paper about Edward Gibbon, expresses his belief that the historian of Rome's decline and fall thought with Thucydides "My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten". It is not a particularly novel observation, but a faded

pamphlet lying before me is a reminder of the fact that "prize compositions", "prize poems", and "poems on occasions" are always much the same as they were in the time of Thucydides, feeble things, and the wonder is why men go on encouraging them and why sane people continue to produce them, unless there is a fond hope that some of them may turn out to be as good as "The Builders" of Henry Van Dyke or the great Commemoration Ode of James Russell Lowell. Even the devoted worshipers of the Autocrat must admit that as his college class drew nearer to the front rank of the Alumni processions, his reunion-verses grew quite tiresome; but no one could go on for some seventy years writing anniversary stanzas on the same theme without degenerating into the commonplace. The pamphlet is a little one of thirteen pages, entitled "Pompeii, A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement, July, 1819; by Thomas Babington Macaulay, of Trinity College." It was of this juvenile poem that the boyish author wrote to his father on February 5, 1819: "I have not, of course, had time to examine with attention all your criticism on 'Pompeii'. I certainly am much obliged to you for withdrawing so much time from more important business to correct my expressions. Most of the remarks which I have examined are perfectly just; but as to the more momentous charge, the want of a moral, I think it might be a sufficient defence that, if a subject is given which admits of none, the man who writes without a moral is scarcely censurable."* Poets, whether young or old, seldom take kindly to criticism of their lines, but one cannot help feeling some sympathy with the

*Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, I, 93.

youthful Thomas in his gentle rebellion against the unpoetic demand of his somewhat priggish parent for a "moral", although the subject of "Pompeii" ought to be far more fruitful of "morals" than that which ten years later was inflicted upon Tennyson, whose "Timbuctoo" carried off the prize in 1829. The Laureate's successful "piece" is less impressive than Thackeray's biting burlesque—not of Tennyson but of everything produced on that absurd theme—beginning something like this:

"In Africa—a quarter of the world—

Men's skins are black; their hair is crisped and curled,
And somewhere there, unknown to public view,
A mighty city lies, called Timbuctoo."

Tennyson competed because his father wished him to, and "in place of preparing a new poem he furbished up an old one written in blank verse instead of the orthodox heroic couplet and sent it in."* Milnes wrote at the time, "Tennyson's poem has made quite a sensation; it is certainly equal to most parts of Milton!" The future Lord Houghton was a cheerful, genial person, if he *was* guilty of the most abominable handwriting I ever encountered, for the celebrated scrawls of James Payn, Charles Darwin and Horace Greeley are copperplate script in comparison; and Milnes was only twenty then. I knew quite a number of Tennysons and Miltons, of the mute, inglorious sort, when I was enjoying the enthusiasms of that period of life, under the shadow of the Princeton elms; but somehow their chariots have all been transformed into motor-cars, although they have avoided the fate of Phaëthon, that mythological prototype of a chauffeur.

*Tennyson: E. L. Cary, 19.

"Pompeii", naturally enough, is a fair example of the stilted verse which a bright lad might well have written in 1819. He tells us, among other interesting details, how

"In vain Vesuvius groans with wrath suppress,
And mutter'd thunder in his burning breast,
Long since the Eagle from that flaming peak
Hath soar'd with screams a safer nest to seek.
Aw'd by th' infernal beacon's fitful glare
The howling fox hath left his wonted lair;
Nor dares the browsing goat in vent'rous leap
To spring, as erst, from dizzy steep to steep;"

the moral, which father Zachary failed to detect, being that these intelligent brutes had much more foresight than mere Man, and had wisely decided that a volcano in eruption was "no place for them".

Poor as prize poems may be as poetry, some famous men have not disdained to enter into the competitions. Lord Selborne's effort gained for him the Newdigate prize in 1832, and was deemed worthy of publication in *Blackwood*. The list of prize winners in the two great Universities might well be worth studying, even if the poetry came from the machine and not from inspiration. Byron's Address on the opening of the new Drury Lane has not survived, but the "Rejected Addresses", spontaneous and *hors concours*, will never be wholly forgotten. Indeed a grave personage is recorded as saying of them that he did not understand why they should have been rejected, as some of them were very good.

A book-lover may think that he has an affection for all books, but he surely must draw the line at law-books, books of theology and medical treatises. So many people who have a notion that a book is valuable to a

collector merely because it is old, will insist on bringing to me, in the kindness of their hearts, ancient theological tomes, for example, which are in fact less desirable than old Directories and not for a moment to be compared with old Almanacs. I have a friend who is enamored of school-books and books on mathematics; a mania that has method in it and I can understand the merit of it better than I can the pursuit of first editions of Trollope. He has a remarkable collection and has printed a catalogue in two volumes, not only complete in all details but a handsome specimen of book-making. He showed me a copy once, and in a moment of hallucination I thought that he was going to give it to me, but he carried it away. I am not sure that I would be interested in the collection, and he cares as little for my autographs as I do for his arithmetics. I was silly enough to speak of my hobby while he was fussing with his catalogue and I saw his eyes assume that far-away look which meant that he heard me and that was all. When any one with feigned interest says, "I would like so much to see your autographs", I smile inwardly, if such a feat is possible, and I know that it is only one of those polite fictions which go so far towards making life pleasant. Very few people, especially those with a pet hobby of their own, care a straw about other people's collections, except perhaps in the matter of paintings, which, to use an abominable but familiar phrase, is "altogether a different proposition". The other man's collection seldom assumes importance until the auctioneer falls heir to it. For collectors seldom have much sympathy with collectors who occupy different fields from theirs: indeed I have found more true sympathy between collectors and non-collectors. Steele in one of the numbers of the *Tatler* deals with the mania of col-

lecting and makes much poor fun of one Nicholas Gimcrack, an entomologist, who spent a fortune in accumulating insects; but entomologists have their uses and perhaps Gimcrack, if such a person ever lived, might have retorted that his spiders were as well worth having as Sir Richard's unparalleled collection of unpaid bills. There are useful features of postage-stamp collecting; there are attractions about the hoards of numismatists; one can see why even game-chickens may be profitably "collected"; but I fancy that the hobby of a lady of my acquaintance—the collecting of pianos—might be attended with inconveniences. I fear that the hapless being who confesses that he is an autograph-collector receives the most general condemnation. I once had a notion of bringing together what might be called the by-products of autograph-collecting,—a collection of all the ill-natured and abusive things ever written or printed about autograph-collectors from the beginning of the world to the present day, but it would probably fill a book as big as my *Boydell Shakespeare*, which is so unwieldy that I have had serious thoughts of hiring the tower of the Metropolitan Life Building to hold it. Yet how kind some of our busiest and greatest men have been to the wretches who "write for autographs"; the record of their long-suffering patience would fill another large volume.

There are other manifestations of the autograph fever almost as troublesome as the familiar prayer for the signature of the person addressed; there is, for example, the begging of autographs of other people which the victim is supposed to possess. Hawthorne, when applied to in this manner, became quite fierce and intimated with some vigor that the letters of his friends were valuable to him and not to be parted with. The

venerable Bishop White was more gentle, when beset by that pioneer of American collectors, Doctor William B. Sprague. There is a pleasant, old fashioned dignity about the Bishop's letter which tempts me to reproduce it from the original now lying on the library table. It is a model, and if I ever wrote to men soliciting gifts of that order—which heaven forbid!—it is just the sort of reply that I would like to receive. The Bishop's portraits always make me think of what Aldrich said of Wordsworth—that he gave him the impression of wanting milk: with his benign placidity it is no wonder that he lived until his eighty-ninth year.

“Philad^a, Feb. 12, 1823.

Rev^d & dear Sir:—

I have received your Letter of ye 23d of January, & am disposed to take Measures for compliance with your Request. I suppose that I can furnish you with some signatures, which may be embraced in your design; but, as it will require considerable examination, to distinguish between interesting Letters of former correspondents, & others which I can have no particular Reason to retain, I must defer ye Work, until I have less of pressing Business on my Hands than at present.

In ye mean Time, I am, respectfully

Your very humble servant,

Wm: White.

Rev^d Wm: B. Sprague,
West Springfield,
Massachusetts.”

The Bishop was doubtless one of the last to transport into the nineteenth century the use of frequent capitals, the archaic “ye” and the quaint long “s’s” which are not “f’s” as many believe.

The subject of autographs is to me what King Charles's head was to Mr. Dick. That I am not alone

in my infirmity is proved by a letter of James Freeman Clarke, written in 1878, in which he acknowledges the receipt of a catalogue of a German collection, and says, naively, "Notwithstanding my professed indifference to any autographs except those of the Apostle Paul, Alfred, Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, Martin Luther and the like, I confess that my mouth watered at the sight of so many of them. It was a pleasure even to read the description and title". These words, showing that his indifference was a mere pretense, were written by a serious and scholarly man, famous in his day as preacher, author and educator, and I am sure that even his little pretense would soon have been abandoned if I could only have been honored for a little while with his company at the library table.

Almost every one finds it hard to understand as he attains the period when juniors say to him, "Now, at *your* time of life"—a form of expression I have come to loathe—that he is really no longer—to use another wretched locution,—“up to date”. I am beginning to comprehend the feelings of some of the excellent be-wigged old gentlemen of the seventeen hundreds whose lives lapped over that mysterious one-hundredth year which is just like any other year, but there is a weird something about it, indescribable, impossible of definition, which makes it different. I am certain that those of us who awoke on the morning of the first day of January in the year of grace 1900, had a consciousness of passing into a new age, although—not to revive the ancient controversy but merely to assert the indisputable fact—the new century did not begin until a year later. How painfully modern Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Shelley must have seemed to the men

who knew so well their Crabbe and their Cowper. It has always been my opinion that the unfortunates who happen to be born exactly in the middle of a century are taken at an unfair advantage by those who arrive in a century's closing years or in its opening days. They grow old-fashioned so much sooner. In Comyn Carr's book of reminiscences (published in 1908)—by no means one of those dull productions about which we were chatting a few pages back—he says heroically that he is not very gravely discouraged by occasionally finding himself ranked as a champion of an outworn fashion, but he groans over the revelation of a "cultivated young writer of the newer school" that 'among men of culture Dickens is now never read after the age of fourteen!' This cultivated young writer—we must take Mr. Carr's word as to his culture, for otherwise one would be likely to consider him what Lord Dundreary called "wather an ass"—must have been trying to impose upon the credulous old gentlemen who frankly owns that he was born in the misty mid-region of 1849. What pained me most was the meek and submissive acquiescence of Carr in his relegation to the category of back numbers, at the surely not venerable age of fifty-nine. As Thomas Bailey Aldrich said the day after his birthday, "It is unpleasant to be fifty-nine, but it would be unpleasanter not to be, having got started!" I insist, however, that it is not enough to warrant the exile of any ordinary person from the realms of contemporaneous interest. Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Tennyson, Browning, all great Victorians, if an American may be reckoned in that class, are not, I venture to say, as obsolete as the cultivated infant would have us believe; if they were, there would not be so much said of them and written of them in

this fast aging first decade of the twentieth century. Returning to Dickens, I prefer to the babe's prattle of Carr's young interlocutor, the dictum of Chesterton, when he tells us "that Dickens will have a high place in permanent literature there is, I imagine, no prig surviving to deny."

In a time so remote that I shrink from mentioning the date precisely, I overheard a young prig say to the feminine companion whom he was escorting to her home after listening to a lecture by Charles Sumner, "he suits the masses". It was a singularly inept remark as applied to the stilted and artificial oratory of the pompous Senator; but the fact that "he suits the masses" may well be cited to warrant the assurance of the lasting quality of Dickens' fame. The lesser lights are growing pale and dim in comparison with his and with that of his illustrious compeer, who ranks higher perhaps in the estimation of the "cultured" but no higher in the favor of the general. Bulwer Lytton, Charlotte Brontë, Trollope, and George Eliot, if we may group together stars of such varying magnitude, shine more feebly than they did while they were in the full blaze of their glory. But when one takes from the shelf or from the library table a volume of Dickens or of Thackeray, he may well exclaim, as was said of the Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, "This is no book; who touches this, touches a man."

Many of us still retain an affection for Trollope, even if he was, as some recent compilers of literary hand-books say, "one of the most boisterous, tactless and unmetaphysical of writing men"—all the more precious to me because of his unmetaphysicality. In novels '*à bas* metaphysics!' If it be true, as these autocratic tyrants of taste aver, that he "keeps his nose close

down, dog-like, to the prosaic texture of life," he pursued the game to good purpose. To all lawyers, he must ever be dear because of his delightful Old Bailey character of Chaffanbrass; to all the clergy he must be a source of joy for his innumerable bishops, rectors and curates; and to all physicians a lovable man for Doctor Thorne. Was he not as much unlike Hawthorne as one novelist may be unlike another, yet did not Hawthorne say that Trollope's work "suited" him? "They precisely suit my taste" wrote the author of the *Scarlet Letter*, "solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef, and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business and not suspecting that they were made a show of." Yet in these days they cannot be expected to compete with such illuminating representations of real life as may be found in the pages of—let us say—Elinor Glyn, who manifestly aspires to be the Aphra Behn of modern literature.

It is some consolation to realize that we commencing patriarchs are able to get more satisfaction from our comfortable places at the library table than others get from the seats of the mighty at horse-shows, bridge tournaments, automobile contests, and golf competitions. An enthusiastic golfer once confided to me that the most charming adjunct of his sport was the shandy-gaff and the high ball which otherwise the stern decree of the medical man would have denied to him. Let us say it in all modesty and self-depreciation, we know so much more than is known by the modern smooth-faced devotee of the safety razor, who freely permits the unattractive contour of his mouth to betray the imperfec-

tions of his character. I am convinced that if the customary motor-car fiend would shroud his expression in hirsute concealment he would appear far less fierce and domineering. If language was given to us to conceal thought, surely beards were meant to hide brutality. Even these young people will come in time to the consciousness of their present ignorance and the realization of the truth that men learn by experience. Aldrich—not Nelson, the tariff-king, but Thomas, a king of modern American letters—said “I often feel sorry for actresses who are always too old to play Juliet by the time they have learned how to do it. I know how to play Hamlet and Romeo now, but my figure doesn’t fit the parts.” Sad it is to reflect that our figures are unfitted for the roles we would so hugely enjoy. Possibly it would be better for us if we ventured more in the outer world and spent less time at the library table; but we cannot always bestride the galloping horse or trifle with the fascinating brassie. It will be only a few years before riders and golfers alike will meet us in the fields where we will all be reduced to socialistic uniformity, as I am taught to believe. Then, perhaps, I may not regret that I yielded, willingly and lovingly, to the temptations of the library table.

THE DELIBERATIONS OF A DOFOB

IN the neighboring city of Chicago they have a club which boasts the name of "The Dofobs". It is not a pretty name but it means much to the members. Every two or three years it produces a Year Book and it has printed "The Love Letters of Nathaniel Hawthorne", a copy of which now and then appears at the auction block and is sold for a fabulous price. Aside from such occasional diversions, these people indulge in pure Dofobery, which is not really as bad as it sounds. It signifies a peculiar relation towards books and bookish things; not a mania for books, but a comfortable enjoyment of them; not a craving for them solely because they happen to be old, or rare, or famous, but a delight in them and in the associations which cluster about them, in talking about them, in scribbling about them, in amusing oneself with them. It does not require much sagacity to read between the letters of the name; for most people know what "d.f." stands for, and "d.o.f." is only a variation.

A Dofob does not trouble himself much about what others think of him or of his favorite pursuits, because he has what may be fairly styled the true Dofobian spirit and lives up to the immortal definition of an honest man as enunciated by the philosopher Timothy Toodles. The honest man, according to the *dictum* of that profound observer, was one who did not care a small Indian copper coin of trifling value—that is to say, a dam; although I think the philosopher added

some superfluous words about not caring that for what sort of coat a man wore as long as his heart was in the right place. This sartorial and physiological supplement is immaterial, for the truth of the characterization lies in the primary expression: perhaps the word "continental" prefixed to the name of the coin would impart to the definition a distinctively American flavor.

Mr. Growoll in his interesting account of American Book Clubs tells of a number of these associations, whose laudable purposes are grave, serious and edifying; wrapped in a mantle of dignity which is most becoming but which arouses emotions of awe rather than of sympathy. The Dofob is not as serious as the Grolierite or the Caxtonian. The fact that many of his fellow-beings look upon him as an individual of imperfect intelligence because of his inordinate interest in books, he considers to be equivalent to a patent of nobility; for if he loves a particular book with a passion transcending all others, he is thereby raised, in his own estimation, far above the ordinary level of mankind and looks down from empyrean heights on those who are not sufficiently endowed with intellect or with intuition to comprehend that the veritable Dofob is the only person who possesses the power of recognizing at sight the very best and worthiest of all the books ever printed since the days of Fust and Gutenberg. With a superb self-appreciation and yet with the greatest affection and respect for my companions in Dofobishness, I own that in the depths of my being I consider no individual Dofob to be quite as praiseworthy, deserving and omniscient as I am. I regard myself as preeminently a D.O.F. and all that those letters imply, happy in the contentment which usually results from absolute self conceit. Our chief pleasure is in being regarded as con-

firmed and irresponsible cranks, defying the contumely of the world, hugging to our bosoms our pet delusions and willing to let other Dofobs hug theirs as closely. I might however be jealous if any one of them should hug too long and affectionately my own sweetheart book, for lovely books are as delightful but often as untrustworthy as lovely women. They are apt to run off with some millionaire. I am sadly conscious of the fact that the much prized Davenant folio or my Beaumont and Fletcher would be as happy in the arms of another as they are in my own. I think that I may as well abandon the metaphor here and now, for I may be unwittingly led into something which is described in the catalogues as "curious" or "facetious". The man who was arrested for stealing a folio Shakespeare which he was lugging home after the fashion of Charles Lamb and who pleaded that it was a joke, was justly reminded by the wise magistrate that he was carrying the joke too far. (Cf. Joseph Miller's Reports, *passim*). There is such a thing as carrying an analogy a little too far.

Parenthetically, one is moved to inquire why it is that we Dofobs who write about books are accustomed to adopt a style of labored facetiousness, for books are serious things. It is like the fashion of those who relate the history of old New York and who assume the tone of "Knickerbocker": or of the delineator of life in the far west who cannot help imitating Bret Harte as the novelist of adventure in knighthood days imitates Sir Walter Scott. Books ought to be worthy of pure Johnsonese, the only dialect of dignity enough to deal with so solemn a subject.

A Dofob would not assert with offensive pride that the majority of people in this prosperous country are

devoid of a real affection for books, but he is sorry for some of those who fondly imagine that they are bookish, occasionally reveal their inmost thoughts about books, and unconsciously disclose their sad incapacity to understand the essential nature of book-loving. In the matter of bindings, for example, there is commonly a lamentable ignorance. A few years ago I fortunately discovered a book printed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, produced in New York, and bound in the fine old calf of the period: a little dilapidated by the ravages of time and the bookseller's shelves, but by no means in a state of ruin. That very binding made it cost me a goodly sum, for the contents were of no general interest; the book itself, the entity, binding and all, gave it value. I honored that book and after petting it properly, gladly gave it to a dear old gentleman, the only man in the city who knew anything about the subject dealt with in the book. A few weeks later he proudly brought it back to me in order that I might inscribe a few words on the fly-leaf, and he said with considerable satisfaction, "You see, sir, that I have it neatly rebound!" And so he had, to my horror. The splendid old calf—I am referring to the binding—in which a Dofob would have rejoiced greatly, had been replaced by smug, cheap and modern cloth. Then it was that I grieved because my vocabulary was limited to the few thousand words which the devotee of statistics allows to the average man. All the languages of Mezzofanti could not have done justice to the situation; but the heroic self-restraint of a Dofob came into play and I suffered in silence. The honest but misguided friend will never know the full extent of the crime, and as the book is more to his liking in its present garb than it was in what he was pleased to call its "shabby"

dress, it would have been needlessly cruel to undeceive him; and, after all, the matter was beyond remedy.

The kind friend who understands the intricacies of the stock-market and who tells me much that I care not for, about my garden, where I should buy my clothes, and what I should have in my library; who enlightens me, as many of our merciless fellow-beings love to do, about all questions of religion or of politics; the dear creature who is fond of saying "Now, what *you* ought to do is"—whatever in the plentitude of his self-contentment he ardently believes to be what every one else should do, because *he* does it; this one, I say, seldom knows anything about bindings. "*I* buy books to read", he brags, as if one could not read comfortably a well-bound book. If you mention Tout, or Rivière, or Hayley, or Zaehnsdorf, to say nothing of Lortic, Prideaux, De Sauty or Cobden-Sanderson, he stares at you with glassy eyes of indifference and perhaps he calls your attention to a Barrie "edition de looks", or to some of the paralyzing productions which the simple-minded are deluded into purchasing by the influence of alluring advertisements and insinuating circulars designed to mislead the ambitious but unwary buyers of books in the market-place.

I plead guilty to the charge of being a dreary old fool over books, but chiefly over old books, for they have a settled and permanent character which no one may impeach. We may be tolerably sure about them; they are generally what they seem to be, with their broad margins, their solid, substantial type, and their charming air of dignity. Most of the books of our day are unworthy of absolute confidence, and their paper, their binding, and their typography are a source of grief

to the judicious. The man whose literary pabulum is sufficiently supplied by his daily newspaper may ask why an old book, with aged and decayed covers, is better than a new one with that outward adornment of gilt which some publishers delight to lavish upon us. The sagacious Dofob will not undertake the task of breaking his way into the solid density of such a mind or of explaining to him the reason, for the game is not worth the candle. When I was a boy I rashly attempted to convince a likely colored lad that slavery was right and should never be abolished, but to my fervid eloquence he invariably responded "Well, I doan' know 'bout that". It was an effective rejoinder and I now believe that he was fairly entitled to his name of Solomon. The smart individual of these times is beyond the reach of argument, and all one can do is to say to him, "Go to your newspaper, buy subscription editions of 'standard authors', fill your shelves with 'the best sellers', and be as happy as you may".

But notwithstanding what I have just said, it is a favorite fallacy quite prevalent among the uninitiated that a book must be old in order to attract the bibliolater. True, as Emily Dickinson, with a magnificent disregard of rhyme, sings:

"A precious mouldering pleasure 'tis
To meet an antique book,
In just the dress his century wore:
A privilege, I think."

A Dofob, however, does not restrict himself to such dolorous delights as "mouldering pleasures", and sees no good reason why he should not be fascinated by something fresh from a good press as well as by what writers about books are addicted to calling "musty

tomes". A "tome", I believe has come to mean "a large book", but a Dofob does not necessarily prize it above a slender duodecimo, any more than he would prefer a fat friend to a thin one; and while gray hairs may be held dear, blond locks and jetty curls may be just as winning. A thoughtful physician once told me that he never read a book that was less than ten years old; he was not and could never be a Dofob. The rule may be well enough when applied to fiction, and a rigid observance of it would save some valuable time; but why should a man living in the earliest quarter of the last century have delayed for a decade the reading of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound", or "Rob Roy", or "The Heart of Midlothian," or the two precious volumes of Charles Lamb's works", then given to the world? A Dofob cannot be persuaded that any book should be neglected because it is old or condemned merely because it is new. The passion for rare relics of antiquity is one not difficult to comprehend, but it is not exclusive of a passion for the best of modern books. Whether the date upon the title be that of the reign of Elizabeth or of the time of Victoria or Edward, "a book's a book for a' that".

There is a good deal of sameness in the praises of books by book-lovers. In his Anthology called "Book Song", Mr. Gleeson White says: "friends that never tire, that cannot be scorned or dallied with, is an idea that recurs constantly", and in regard to those eulogies of special volumes with which most of us are familiar, he remarks justly, "at times the pride of ownership becomes a little irritating and seems deliberately worded to provoke jealousy". It is a characteristic of Dofobishness that the Dofob does not indulge in panegyrics upon his own property, although he may do a little pri-

vate bragging among intimates. He may dote upon the book of another, and borrow it too, giving no credence to the common delusion that a borrowed book is never returned. That is where he shows his superiority over the ordinary man. Nor does he glorify his books as "friends who never tire". I would not care much for any friend who was so devoid of human qualities as not to be tiresome now and then. A companion who was always entertaining would be a cloying sort of person, and even his perfections would grow wearisome in time. The book has an advantage over a friend in this, that it may be thrown in a corner, or thrust in a cabinet, or banished to the back-rows when its allurements begin to pall, and if it experiences any sense of resentment or mortification at such a summary dismissal, it gives no outward or visible signs of dissatisfaction. Moreover books are immensely superior to human friends for they never "call one up" on the telephone, that imperious invader of peace and comfort, a modern affliction more dreadful even than the motor-cycle, that Moloch of the highways, because it has a wider field of operation. One may have some respect for the automobile, king of our roads, but for the vulgar, snorting tyrant, the degradation of a graceful, noiseless bicycle, naught but disgust and horror. No self-respecting horse can meet it without justifiable rebellion. I have found it the Jugernaut of New Jersey.

Few comprehend fully the bookishness of a book, its deserving dignity, and its peculiar sensitiveness. This man will deliberately turn down the corner of a leaf, and that man will cut the sheets with rude, iconoclastic finger or ruthlessly bend open the tender volume until its back is well-nigh broken. There ought to be a con-

stitutional provision against cruel and unusual punishments of books, for surely they are fellow-citizens of worth and as much entitled to protection as the red men of the West who have recently been added to the number of our masters, or the voluble and dagger-loving emigrant from Italy who comes to us with droves of his kind and cheerfully stabs his women or his rivals in our public streets. I shudder when I remember how often I have beheld the shocking spectacle of a Philistine actually pulling a book from the shelf by the top, or wetting his fingers as he turned the pages of a sacred first edition. But it is better not to dwell upon such harrowing subjects.

However boastful, arrogant and censorious these deliberations may appear, I protest that I am not quite as conceited as I pretend to be. The bravado is assumed. I am really humble, conscious of my limitations, and profoundly deferential towards the experts who are masters of book-history and are able to "collate", while I am, by natural incapacity, utterly unable to share in the collation. I admire these mighty men afar off, and am devoured by envy of their learning. Let me however disclose the miserable truth that I find old Dibdin stupid, that I am dreadfully bored by the tedious catalogues given to us from time to time by some of our non-Dofobian book-clubs, and that in fact I abhor all catalogues of things which I can never hope to call my own. It may be a mark of genuine Dofobery to scorn scientific book-description; it always makes me uneasy and discontented. It affects me much in the same way as the formal phrases of what the companion of my childhood, (bookishly speaking) Captain Mayne Reid, used to call "the closet naturalists"—now known as

“nature fakirs”—must affect men who pursue the tremendous teddy-bear and the boracious bob-cat in their native wilds. I am so much in love with my own few books that I would no more dream of regarding them from the cataloguer’s point of view than I would of measuring my Dulcinea’s features in order to ascertain whether or not she comes up to the standard of beauty prescribed by the dull and pedantic persons who reduce everything to formulas.

Candidly, anything hereinbefore contained to the contrary notwithstanding, I believe that in our beloved country there are more enthusiastic lovers of books than may be found in any other land. Yet, if I am not sadly mistaken, England is the paradise of Dofobs. She ought to be; she is so much older than we are; she was bookish when we were busy in building an empire and boasted more bears than books. It makes my heart palpitate when I glance over the fascinating lists of Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, and see what the libraries of the well-to-do Britons disgorge without ostentation,—treasures which make the book-lover’s soul thrill with the indescribable tremor which only a long-desired book can bring. I find myself wondering whether it will go on forever, if the resources of the innumerable “gentleman’s libraries” in England will be exhausted in our own time at least. I trust not, although I fear that the insatiable demands of American buyers may ultimately absorb the supply. I am not by any means an Anglomaniac, for our English cousins are fast becoming too socialistic for my taste, but surely their auction-sales are more attractive than ours, and what is more delectable than one of their best “book shops”? Why cannot we have such palaces of joy as

those which may be found on the Strand, or in Piccadilly, or in the regions adjacent to the British Museum, or indeed in other places than London, where a Dofob may discover almost everything necessary to sate his appetite. I am affectionately reminiscent of Maggs's. I am not trying to advertise Maggs's; the name is not beautiful, euphonious, or seductive; it reminds one of the nomenclature of Dickens. But the shop is a dream, the managers are tactful and considerate, and there one may browse undisturbed and uninterrupted, with no sorrow but that which comes from the fact that while the prices are low when compared with ours, the purse of a plutocrat could never suffice to give us all the jewels preserved in the coffers of those polite and kindly vendors of dainties. I do not know what may be in Chicago, but in New York we have scarcely anything as alluring or as charming. Why are we denied such luxuries? When I am daring enough to enter the precincts of a New York "book-store"—it is never a "shop"—I approach the majestic salesman with fear and trembling, having already left my pocket-book with the gentle cabman. Does the nobleman lead me smilingly to a quiet recess, place a chair and a table at my disposal, and with tender solicitude submit to me the latest acquisition, the first edition, the extra-illustrated treasure, the autograph letter or manuscript which has just "come in" and has not yet been advertised or catalogued? By no means; he regards me with the same contemptuous hauteur which is displayed by the clerk of a popular hotel when I register my name and plead for "a room with bath". I depart from the chilly halls feeling that I ought to be ashamed for having disturbed the lofty serenity of the supercilious magnate. They do these things better in France and in England: better in almost

every other country as those who have had experience well know. They are content, these foreigners, with moderate profits. It is true that an American bookseller is obliged to pay higher rent and is subjected to heavier expenses because of the extravagant exactions of almost every one in this free land of ours—except, of course, the modest and diffident lawyers. Patriotism does not require one to acquiesce uncomplainingly in the exorbitant prices of our own book dealers. Let me however be fair and qualify my sweeping assertions: I know a few very decent book-vendors in New York and in Boston who want to be reasonable and are “not so bad”. I am grateful to them for many favors. In the words of Heron-Allen’s “Ballade of Olde Books”,

“I’ve haunted Brentano and John Delay,
And toyed with their stories of France so free,
At Putnam’s and Scribner’s from day to day
I’ve flirted with Saltus and Roe (E. P.):
But weary of all, I have turned with glee
To Bouton’s murk shelves with their wealth untold,
Yearning for Quaritch in Piccadilly
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.”

This would be more accurate if some of the names were changed. I plead not guilty to Saltus and Roe, and I may perhaps be forgiven for not remembering at the moment who John Delay was or is.

Why do we allow such sordid considerations as prices to influence us in any way? Most of us Dofobs are devoid of a surplus of funds, but we value our possessions all the more because we may have had to make some sacrifices to secure them. If we were indifferent about cost, we would lose much of the pleasure of ownership. I well remember the time when I abstained

from luncheon in order to buy a second-hand, shabby volume at Leggatt's. I do not have to deny now my appetite for mid-day food, but whenever I come upon one of those old books in my peregrinations about the library, I have the pleasant little throb of the heart which brings back to me the ardor of youth, and those cheap treasures take to themselves a halo which transcends the brilliancy of even an illuminated missal or a noble Caxton. Those long cherished companions speak to me in eloquence scarcely to be comprehended by one who is not a Dofob to the core.

We are grateful to the kindly dealers who send to us catalogues full of temptations for those who are so ready to be tempted. With James Freeman Clarke already quoted, we repeat that "it is a pleasure even to read the description and the title", and often like Eugene Field of blessed memory we mark the items which are too bewitching to resist as if we were going to acquire them and then either forget about them or resolve that our purse cannot afford the luxury, afterwards confident that we bought them and searching for them in vain in the entrancing regions of the book-cases.

Then what an insane joy there is in arranging the volumes, sometimes lamenting because the shelves are not exactly adapted to the association of fellow-books so that we fear that they will not be as friendly one to another as we would like to have them. If any one needs occupation for a rainy day, what more agreeable work may he find than that of assorting the books, so that not only will their sky-line be less jagged than that of lower New York, but that their contents may be of a nature to make them as sociable as they ought to be: while it must be borne in mind that the colors of their bindings should not be too glaringly inharmonious.

And after all have been arranged, it is the joy of the genuine Dofob to arrange them all over again. There are times when the shelves overflow, and then comes the question of a new book-case and a still graver question as to where it shall be placed, leading to a further question about the enlargement of the house, which should be constructed on the Globe-Wernicke principle, for the main use of a house is to store books in it.

But there comes to every Dofob the thought that it will not be long before he must leave them. What is to become of them? No one will ever worship them as he has done all his life. They are interwoven with his existence and it is pitiful to think that he must be parted from them. I fear that in the world of the hereafter there may be no books, but it is not easy for me to imagine a heaven where books are not. I do not mean to be irreverent and I do not know whether I may attain even a bookless heaven, but I am unorthodox enough to own that I might prefer a bookish Hades.

IN A LIBRARY CORNER

I HATE an orderly library. It has a formal air which repels familiarity; one cannot ramble in it, stroll aimlessly about it, come upon unexpected "finds", or pluck a blossom here and there without fear of consequences. It is as devoid of charm as the stiff, uncompromising gardens of the eighteenth century which arouse ill temper by their arrogant right-angles. The card-catalogue itself is an encourager of angry passions; and glass doors are odiously inhospitable. What care I if dust accumulate? It is a blessed privilege to brush it off. What need have I of a card-index, when in hunting for what I want I may discover treasures hitherto lost to memory? When I encounter glass doors, those grudging guardians of the sanctuary, I long to fracture the panes with one mighty kick, for they are offensive with their *noli me tangere* exclusiveness. I want my books where I need not open a door to get at them or climb a ladder to reach them.

Not that I am averse to a certain method of arrangement, or to a well-defined color-scheme in the matter of bindings. No one wishes to put a tiny 16mo by the side of a towering quarto, or to fill the lower shelves with duodecimos and the upper ones with folios; nor does any one desire to fret his eyes by massing together colors which scream at each other and disturb the peace. I would not have Petroleum V. Nasby or the Orpheus C. Kerr Papers elbowing the "voluminous pages" of

Gibbon or the serious dignity of Grote; but Boswell and Trevelyan need not be aggrieved by a close proximity to such inferior productions as Collingwood's *Life of Lewis Carroll* or Hallam Tennyson's disappointing Memoir of his illustrious father. "There are few duller biographies", says Augustine Birrell, "than those written by wives, secretaries, or other domesticated creatures. Neither the purr of the hearth-rug nor the unemancipated admiration of the private secretary should be allowed to dominate a biography". True, Trevelyan was Macaulay's nephew, but he was barely of age when his uncle died, and had not yet been wholly "domesticated".

It is almost needless to say that these wise utterances are not intended to apply to public libraries, those mausoleums of books, where one may "consult volumes" but never really read them; for how is it possible for anybody who is not endowed with a power of phenomenal self-absorption, to forget that the custodians, although unseen, are perpetually on guard, while the enforced silence of the place is a constant temptation, well-nigh irresistible, to arouse the echoes with defiant yells. In one of those halls of grandeur miscalled "reading rooms", I am always reminded of "study hour" in school, and am in momentary expectation of hearing some one ask of the grim presiding functionary the old, familiar question, "Please, sir, may I go out?"

In every true library, there are sacred corners. In their cosy precincts you do not usually come upon the dress-parade volumes, imposing in their garb of polished calf or of velvety morocco, addressing you in solemn accents, reminding you of the aristocracy of their long descent, forbidding you to disturb them by

casual pullings-down or thoughtless turning of their chilly pages. Their glacial aspect appals the ardent lover and freezes the founts of affection. These are seldom to be found in corners; they demand the showy places on the shelves where they may intimidate the beholder and turn him away abashed at their impressive array. They are as much shut off from the admirer's fond touch as are the alleged crown-jewels in the Tower or the priceless manuscripts in the British Museum. My ideal library is composed chiefly of corners where one may linger in morning-jacket and slippers, and not be conscious of the need of attiring himself in the evening garments which conventionality decrees to be necessary for those who take part in stately functions. I often long to disarrange the symmetry of some "gentleman's library", just as when reading Johnson, or Gibbon, or Hamilton W. Mabie I have a fiendish propensity to split an infinitive or to end a sentence with a preposition.

Now if I were bent on making a foolish pretense of what is known as "good taste", which I have no right or disposition to boast of, I would assert untruthfully, but no one could disprove it, that in these snug retreats I feast upon "The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning", or Evelyn's Diary, or Pepys, or Sir Thomas Browne, or Elia. Every one who affects a literary "pose" is given to praising Elia; and there are few more precious books in the world. Yet if those immortal essays should appear to-day for the first time, they would have only what the newspapers style a "limited circulation". A dinosaur would have just as much popularity in the annual Horse Show, for they belong to the era of the stage-coach when people did not "do the Lake Country" in an escorted tour on a Hodgman

car, and the Venetian gondola had not been crowded out of the Grand Canal by snorting motor-boats; when there were great men; poets, novelists, essayists, historians and statesmen. To the question, "Why have we no great men?" Mr. Chesterton rejects the answer that it is because of "advertisement, cigarette smoking, the decay of religion, the decay of agriculture, too much humanitarianism, too little humanitarianism, the fact that people are educated insufficiently, the fact that they are educated at all". But his own answer, "We have no great men chiefly because we are always looking for them", may be smart, but it is not convincing. The fact is that we do not have great men chiefly because we think we have no need of them.

The craze for equality has so possessed our minds that if one of us is presumptuous enough to thrust his head above the struggling mob that surrounds him, we set to work with one accord to pull him down, for who is he, forsooth, that he should assume to know more than we do or to be more than we are? In the days when the ignorant and the mediocre had not come to understand the might of their power, there were leaders; but however greatly they may need wise leaders now, they have become the leaders themselves and the ambitious are only astute and adroit followers. The state of the times is reflected in our literature; and as every man has arrived at the belief that he is an infallible judge upon questions of politics and of government, so he fancies that he is divinely endowed as a judge of all things literary. Thus it has come to pass that the guerdon of fame is bestowed, not upon the best book but upon the best seller. It has also come to pass that the only individual who is allowed to dominate his race is the editor of a newspaper. Great is the power of

humbug; there is but one god, which is "the people",—and the editor is his prophet. Every one from the cardinal to the curate, from the President to the post-master, trembles before the majesty of a malicious monkey who by some mischance has contrived to get hold of a printing-press; for his penny compendium of slander and of crimes reaches the sons of manual toil who go to their work in the early morning, filled with envy of the well-to-do, grumbling at the fate which condemns them to labor while men whom they regard as no better than themselves enjoy sports and luxuries denied to them, ready to drink in the flattery addressed to them and rejoicing in the bitterest of assaults upon wealth and vested interests. No one is great to them except the crafty demagogue who ministers to their self-importance.

The mild and gentle Thomas Bailey Aldrich said in a moment of unusual irritation: "American newspapers are fearfully and wonderfully made. If about twenty thousand of them could be suppressed, the average decency of the world would be increased from twenty-five to fifty per cent." This is no new cry; but it does not avail much to us soured old sufferers from their multitudinous lies and libels, to retire to our library corners and scold at them. In spite of our complaints, we think it a hardship if we cannot peer at them through our glasses over the matutinal coffee and enjoy their lies—about other people.

Great is the power of humbug, I repeat, with an air of imparting a new and important truth. I have just been reading—in a corner—a sketch of James Kent by Mr. James Brown Scott. He says of Charles Sumner that he, said Sumner, was "an ornament of the bar as he later was an ornament of the Senate". But Sumner

was not a real lawyer; he was not fitted for the conflicts of the bar. There is nothing like the battles of the law to take the vanity and pomposity out of a man. I do not wish to be understood as saying that there are no vain or pompous members of the legal profession, but they seldom win much respect or distinction. I doubt even if Sumner can justly be called "an ornament of the Senate". He never *did* anything, he never originated anything; he only "orated", so that in a sense he may have been ornamental; surely not useful. His speeches were carefully prepared and rehearsed; he was weak in debate. If any one cares to waste time upon the speech for which he was caned by Preston Brooks, he will be amazed at the scurrility of the language and the indecency of the vituperation. It is hard to believe that a man of his stalwart frame could be permanently injured by the blows of a light stick such as the one which Brooks used that day. The assault was a wicked performance, but Washington laughed in its sleeve over the outcry which the castigated one made about it. In those days the anti-slavery speakers were hunting for martyrdom, and Sumner made the most of his beating. In course of time, he was supplanted, as a martyr, by the deified horse-thief and murderer, John Brown. When the Senator assumed to dictate to Grant, he found his well-merited fate, and he has passed into oblivion. His useful, modest, hard-working colleague, Henry Wilson, as earnest and enthusiastic an opponent of slavery as Sumner was, is far better entitled to be called "an ornament of the Senate" than his more cultured but less effective associate.

Down in a quiet corner hides an humble cloth-clad little book which scarcely any one cares for except

myself, and its interest to me comes less from its mild satire than from my affection for its author. "Salander and the Dragon, by Frederick William Shelton, M.A. Rector of St. John's Church, Huntington, N. Y.", with its Goodman, its Duke d'Envy, its Gudneiburud, Drownthort, and all the other parodies of Bunyan's nomenclature, makes dull reading for the present generation, and it may be that my liking for it is only a form of perverse vanity. As I glance over the faded leaves, they bring before me the gentle, scholarly Shelton, who had been my father's class-mate at Princeton—delightfully old-fashioned in the time when I had a boyish acquaintance with him. He was quite like his books, small, decorous, with a gleam of the humorous mingled with reflective sadness. I can fancy his shudder of dismay over most of our present-day sensational, highly-colored "literature" falsely so-called. I never knew more than two persons who had ever read "Salander". But it aroused my indignation a year or two ago to read in a flippant review published in one of our magazines, a contemptuous reference to Doctor Shelton, whose nature and whose style were too sweet and pure for the taste of the pert, feminine scribbler.

Near the unoffending duodecimo is the well-beloved "Squibob Papers", not as good as the immortal "Phoenixiana" which George Derby's friends induced him to publish in the middle fifties, a famous precursor of our later and more elaborate "books of American humor". My copy is not of the issue of 1859, but one which was printed by Carleton in 1865, after the author's death. As most people know, poor Derby, who died at thirty-eight, was an officer of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, or, in his own words, "a Topographical Engineer who constantly wears a citizen's dress, for fear

some one will find it out." Comparing them with the Engineers, he remarked that "the Corps of Topographical Engineers was only formed in 1838, while the Engineers date from the time when Noah, sick of the sea, landed and threw up a field-work on Mount Ararat". It was an odd training school for a humorist, but Derby did not need much training.

His "great railroad project" of "The Belvidere and Behrings' Straits Union Railroad", with its branches to the North Pole "to get the ice trade", to Kamchatka "to secure the seal trade for the Calcutta market", and to Cochin China "to secure the fowl trade", reads very much like the prospectus of an exceedingly modern enterprise. His "Sewing Machine with Feline Attachment", by which a cat, induced by a suspended mouse, operates the mechanism, is an ingenious device, and he records that he "has seen one cat (a tortoise-shell) of so ardent and unwearying disposition, that she made eighteen pairs of men's pantaloons, two dozen shirts, and seven stitched shirts, before she lay down exhausted". The Fourth of July Oration, commemorating our forefathers who "planted corn and built houses, killed the Indians, hung the Quakers and Baptists, burned the witches and were very happy and comfortable indeed, and fought the battle named 'the battle of Bunker Hill', on account of its not having occurred on a hill of that name", should never be forgotten if only for the story of the boy who picked his nose on the Fourth of July because it was Independence Day. Not very refined fun, you may say, but food for laughter, and with no taint of a peculiar kind of vulgarity which mars the fun of certain more classic fooling.

Among the tenants of the corner is a cheap and shabby American edition, in two fat, awkward volumes, of

my pet novel, "Ten Thousand a Year", much pawed over and alas! dog's eared; while the first English edition, in three volumes, (Blackwood, 1841, "original cloth"), is seldom aroused from its serene repose on a conspicuous shelf. Ten thousand pounds a year then stood for colossal wealth; and when my boyish mind first applied itself to the study of the fitful fortunes of Tittlebat Titmouse, that income still appeared to represent riches beyond the dreams of avarice. When I began the study of law, I was one day toiling over Kent's Commentaries, and the senior partner, bluff and kindly Aaron J. Vanderpoel, came upon me suddenly, crying out "What are you reading, young man?" I confessed, with the conscious pride which one feels when detected in doing something supposed to be virtuous, that I was reading Kent. "Don't read Kent!" he shouted, "read 'Ten Thousand a Year' ". Perhaps his advice was good; at all events I took it, and I did not tell him that I knew it already from cover to cover.

It is the best "lawyer's novel" ever written, even if it is full of doubtful law. For the hundredth time you will follow with eager interest the progress of the great suit of *Doe ex dem. Titmouse vs. Jolter*, and await in breathless suspense the momentous decision of Lord Widdrington upon the question of the admission of that famous deed with the erasure, however well you may know that he is sure to exclude it; a ruling undeniably wrong, but if his lordship had held otherwise the story must have come to a sudden and ignominious close at the end of the first volume. This would have been a calamity, although the Aubreys and their woes become quite fatiguing and Oily Gammon turns out to be "more kinds of a villain" than is to be met with in actual life. He deserved a different fate; he ought to

have married Kate Aubrey, and lived unhappily ever afterwards. I refuse to believe that he was guilty of the meaner crimes attributed to him in the account of his dying moments; but Warren probably thought that as Gammon had to die, he might as well depart this life in the odor of perfect villainy. He, Gammon, was a liar, thief, perjurer, forger—almost a murderer; but his crowning act of infamy was to devise an elaborate method of suicide to defraud a life-insurance company. If he had lived a little longer, he might have been found giving a rebate or riding on a Third Avenue car without paying his fare.

Warren had about all the worst faults chargeable against a novelist, yet the book has life. It may not be found in the drawing room or on my lady's table, or in the languid hands of those who continually do recline on the sunny side of transatlantic steamers, but it endures. The account of the election in which, to my secret satisfaction, Titmouse defeats Mr. Delamere, is far better than Dickens's attempt to describe the Eatanswill contest and fully as good as Trollope's effort in the same field. Mr. Delamere, one of those impeccable figureheads created chiefly for the purpose of providing a husband for the equally impeccable young female angel who is so transcendently pure that she blushes deeply at the mere thought of a lover, oblivious of the fact that her adored parents must at some time have surrendered shamelessly to the sway of Cupid, is almost too noble for words; and as for Charles Aubrey, did not Thackeray pronounce him to be the greatest of all snobs? But he is such a precious snob.

Yet after we leave the nobility and gentry we find an abundance of humanity in the numerous "characters" who throng the pages, particularly among the lawyers.

They would be just as well off without their impossible names which give them an air of unreality. But at that time it was a favorite custom of fiction-writers to label their personages with tags, and if Dickens may be pardoned for his Verisophts and his Gradgrinds, and Thackeray for Mr. Deuceace, Warren may surely be forgiven for Quicksilver, Subtle, Tag-rag and Going-Gone; and the world will continue to apply the name of "Quirk, Gammon and Snap" to attorneys' firms as long as we have those useful adjuncts of civilization. In my time I have known several Quirks, not a few Gammons, and many Snaps. Snap is a sort of lawyer whom only a lawyer could conceive of; and Gammon, stripped of the basest of his qualities, may be encountered a dozen times a day between the Court House and the Battery.

Not far removed from the company of Titmouse and Gammon, is "Trilby"; the copy with the autograph letter of Du Maurier to Osgood, not the elaborately bound assemblage of the original *Harper* chapters, whose illustrations are so much more attractive than those in the later-published book, with the cancelled pages about Lorrimer and Joe Sibley which so offended the shrinking, diffident Whistler that they were remorselessly cut out—Whistler, who never hurt the feelings of a friend or learned "the gentle art of making enemies". Then there are "The Bab Ballads", and Lear's "Nonsense Book," and Alice, my Lady of Wonderland, and my Lady of Looking Glass country, whom so many adore and so many fail to comprehend. For there are myriads who, like the little Scotch lad, can see nothing in Carroll's playful extravagances except that they contain "a great deal of fection".

It is sad that the modern disposition to overdo every-

thing should have so trampled upon such a delicious thing as "Trilby"; made it so common; worn it threadbare; and when it was no longer fresh, thrown it aside like a shattered toy. It is a manifestation of the childishness of the multitude which goes wild over some temporary hero and then lets him fall into the limbo of the forgotten when there are none so poor to do him reverence. There must be some magical elixir in "Pinafore", for although thirty years have gone by since it sprang into universal favor, it still survives, is laughed at and admired, and is even quoted in after-dinner speeches. The mention of these speeches, without which no public or semi-public dinner is considered to be worth eating, brings painful reflections. We seem to be losing the art; perhaps we are approaching the heaviness and prosiness of our English cousins on such occasions. It is a melancholy thought that some reformers have introduced the plan of hearing the speeches first and devouring the dinner afterwards; and very lately diners were encouraged by the engraved announcement on the cards of invitation, that there would be "only six speeches, strictly limited to ten minutes each". Yet, as a rule, the speakers are not burning for an opportunity to talk; they may truly say, as a beloved college president was wont to remark to a disorderly class, disturbing his lecture with horse-play, "Young men, this may be a bore to you but it is infinitely more of a bore to me." There is difficulty in adjusting a speech to the tastes of the present-day dinner crowds; the time of the unending stream of anecdotes has passed, with its everlasting "that reminds me", and it seems to be succeeded by an epidemic of the serious, which is not easily dealt with in the presence of a mob flushed with champagne and shrouded in tobacco-smoke. Some resort to epigram,

but in fifteen minutes the epigram begins to degenerate into jerky twaddle and palls upon the jaded appetite. Now and again the orator exhibits an inclination to do what our newspapers are forever howling about—to “probe” something or somebody; but probing is always a painful operation and frequently does much more harm than good. It is not given to many to be really entertaining in discourse, so that our few entertainers are sadly overworked. This unhappy condition of affairs has brought us to the latest stage of infamy, when post-prandial talkers demand pay for their performances: and we may expect to see the day or the night, when the star of the evening will refuse to rise in his place and do his act until the pecuniary reward has been tendered to him in specie, bills, or certified cheque. Fancy the toast-master’s emotions if as he begins the familiar “We have with us to-night” he is interrupted by a cry from the hired guest, “You’re a saxpence short!”

Much unlike the books of which we have been speaking, but in its own way as attractive, is Mr. Atlay’s “Victorian Chancellors”, a collection of model biographies, of interest not only to lawyers but to lovers of history. Atlay makes no claim that his undertaking is to be regarded as a continuation of Lord Campbell’s “Lives”, and his methods are absolutely different from those of Campbell, who is amusing but so palpably unfair and often inaccurate that full faith and credit cannot be given to him. I regret that the “Lives of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court” have not been written by some competent lawyer of our time, with sufficient leisure and a taste for authorship, as fair and free from personal prejudice as Atlay’s work proves him to be. The “Lives” that have hitherto appeared

are by no means satisfactory. Flanders, Van Santvoord, and Tyler, the biographer of Roger Brooke Taney, are painstaking enough and undoubtedly conscientious, but they are of the old school, dull in style, with little or no sense of historical perspective. The biographies of Jay and of Marshall are not adequate; they do not reveal the men to us with that distinctness which is necessary to hold the reader's attention. The "Lives" of Chase are weak and flimsy. Some of the great Associate Justices might be included in the series—Story, Curtis, Nelson, Miller; and perhaps others—famous for long and faithful judicial service if not for surpassing legal ability. Somehow our modern writers are not at their best in biography; those of sufficient skill and industry, like Henry Adams and James Ford Rhodes, are led to devote themselves to general history which affords a broader field. Moreover, a Justice of the Supreme Court is not as closely identified with politics and the administration of the government as an English Chancellor usually is, and the dry technical details of the career of a mere lawyer are not tempting to the man of letters.

There is a different corner, in a darker part of the library, where one may well linger when the wind is in the east and teeth are in need of gnashing. One of the discomforts of advanced years is that you are unable to do any gnashing without inflicting more pain upon the gnasher than is actually worth while. In this corner are gathered together some of the few books which cannot be loved; wall-flowers of literature, which never made the bookman's heart palpitate with any fond emotion.

Here let us approach with hesitation and timidity,

for however dry and disagreeable a book may be, still it is a book. "Somebody loved it". The man who evolved it, who brought it forth, who labored over it, who corrected the proofs, was pleased with it; deformed and misshapen though it may be in the eyes of others, it was beautiful to him. Moreover, much may after all be learned from the poorest of books; and the food from which I would turn in scorn, may to another be palatable. Therefore I wish it to be clearly understood that in making what are called "derogatory" remarks about any book, I am guiltless of the offence of setting up my own judgment and preference against the view and opinion of any one else whomsoever; I am merely expressing my own personal feelings. If it be asserted by some one who chances not to agree with me, that these feelings are of no importance to any one but to myself, I may reply that I admit it and that no one is obliged to read what I have written; and should he complain that he has paid "very hard cash" for my book and has a right to full consideration, I will answer, as Mr. Lang answered somebody,—that he should read Mazzini, and learn that man has no rights worth mentioning, only duties. Moreover I would say to him that if he can prove that he paid for the volume its full price, and did not pick it up at a discount in some second-hand book shop, that refuge of lame, halt and blind books, or at a bargain counter in a department store, I will cheerfully refund his money, provided he will furnish me with a sworn affidavit declaring solemnly that he sincerely admires the book which I detest. But even the omniverous reader must like some books better than others. If, as was truly said, no cigars are bad, some are certainly more smokeable than others, and some pretty women are prettier than other pretty

women. If the books I do not like were the only books in the world, I suppose that I would be fond of them as Frederick was of Ruth until he beheld the loveliness of Major-General Stanley's numerous daughters.

One of the black sheep of my flock is called "Random Reminiscences: by Charles H. E. Brookfield", published in 1902. The author is the son of Thackeray's Brookfield, and his portrait shows what manner of man he must be. How any rational human being could write out or cause to be published such a flat, stale and unprofitable mess, passes understanding. The most wretched of anecdotes are retailed, and if he chances upon a fairly good one he spoils it in the telling. "I am not aware", he says in his preface, "that I have included in this volume anything which appears to me of importance; I trust that I have not either committed the impertinence of expressing any views." This may have been meant in a facetious way, but it is obviously so true that one is impelled to ask why on earth he wrote it. He is so proud of his pointless stories that he makes one long to go out and kill something, thus creating a counter-irritant. How can any one fail to give way to inextinguishable laughter over this final outburst of glee: "Thanks to Dr. Walther and his treatment, I put on nearly 2 stone weight in a little over two months. I was 10 stone 4 before I went, and 12 stone 2 when I left. And I am over 12 stone to-day, three years later". From his humor I should think that he was heavier. I have been waiting patiently for a second edition to ascertain whether he has grown to any extent, but none has appeared. No wonder that he finished his autobiography with a quotation from a newspaper which said of him, on his supposed decease: "But, after all, it is at his club

that he will be most missed". Jolly dog, how he must have warmed the cockles of their hearts with his merry jests!

In the same corner with the jovial Brookfield and his "twelve stone" are gathered together the various biographies whose titles begin with "The True" or "The Real". I confess that I have not read through "The True Thomas Jefferson", although I am burdened with two copies, but I have ploughed through "The True Abraham Lincoln", and found it an ordinary piece of hack-work, marred by blunders. The calm assumption which leads a writer to proclaim that he alone portrays "the true" and "the real", as if all other accounts were false, is condemnatory at the outset. As for Jeaffreson's lot,—*"The Real Lord Byron"* and *"The Real Shelley"*,—they are monuments of dullness, the subjects overloaded with petty details of no value to any one. Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson, who was always publishing "Books About" something or somebody, has presented to mankind his "Recollections", conspicuous chiefly for its covert sneers at Thackeray, whom he hated, and studied disparagement of the personal character of that giant who towered so far above Jeaffresonian pigmies. Jeaffreson's books belong to the Sawdust School of literature. He has not even the brightness of Percy Fitzgerald, who has so long made the most of his stock in trade, a certain friendship and association with Dickens, and who in his two volumes of "Memories of an Author" is almost as bad as Jeaffreson at his best. It is true that Dickens had a personal liking for Fitzgerald, when the latter was a contributor to "All The Year Round", but I believe that Charles Dickens the Younger not many years ago expressed some doubts as to the intimacy of the two men.

Jeaffreson was a weak and self-important person, jealous of his betters. George Somes Layard says, in his interesting "Life of Shirley Brooks",* that Jeaffreson in his "Book of Recollections" wrote "with ill concealed envy of a far abler and more successful man than himself" a silly fling at Brooks concerning the name "Shirley"; and elsewhere refers to the "Recollections" as a "querulous and pawky book". The characterization is undeniably just; plainly in accord with the opinion of the reading public; and the two pawky volumes rest peacefully in the trash corner.

In company with Jeaffreson will be found everything written by Mr. William Carew Hazlitt, who, in a long life of devotion to the accumulation of miscellaneous information of doubtful value and to the parading of the name of Hazlitt, has caused a vast number of pages to be covered with typographical records of his diligence and of his unfailing capacity for making blunders. Full forty years ago he was unlucky enough to come into close contact with the keen lance of one James Russell Lowell, who riddled his editions of Webster and of Lovelace, included in John Russell Smith's "Library of Old Authors". Lowell wrote that "of all Mr. Smith's editors, Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt is the worst. He is at times positively incredible, worse even than Mr. Halliwell, and that is saying a good deal.† Whether Hazlitt was worth flaying as Lowell flayed him, may be questioned. But Hazlitt still goes on, in his Boeotian way; always inept; sometimes so offensive that, as in the case of his "Four Generations of a Literary Family" it has been necessary to withdraw the

*A Great Punch Editor, London, 1907.

†My Study Windows, 337.

work from circulation.* An example of his "foolish notions" may be seen in one of his latest books, "The Book-Collector" (1904) which has a sub-title composed of fifty-one words. Mr. Hazlitt announces the astonishing generalization that the autograph collector does not care for books or for manuscripts beyond the extent of a fly leaf or inscribed title page, and that he is a modern and inexcusable Bagford who tears out the inscription and throws away the book. He cites the case of "a copy of Donne's Sermons, with a brilliant portrait of the author—and a long inscription by Izaak Walton presenting the volume to his aunt. It was in the pristine English calf binding, as clean as when it left Walton's hands *en route* to his kinswoman, and such a delightful signature. What has become of it? It is sad even to commit to paper the story—one among many. An American gentleman acquired it, tore the portrait and leaf of inscription out, and threw the rest away".

I believe him—to use the language of a mighty hunter—to be a meticulous prevaricator. If the tale be true, and I should like to have Mr. William Carew Hazlitt under cross-examination for a while, it only shows that there may be a few vandals in the tribe of autograph collectors, but no true collector would ever be guilty of such a wanton crime. Bagford tore out title-pages, but that affords no evidence that book-lovers are habitually given to the folly of tearing out title pages. As for the case being "one of many", I deny it; if he had known of another instance he would have gloried in the description of it. But he never knew law, logic or truth, and upon his indictment for

*See a review in *The Literary Collector*, September, 1905.

silliness it would be necessary only to offer in evidence his books,—and rest.

But why should I get so very cross about poor old Hazlitt? The wisest thing I can do is to recite to him the touching verses of "You are old, Father William" and remonstrate gently with him in regard to his pernicious habit of incessantly standing upon his head. It will be a good plan to return to the favorite corner and soothe my ruffled spirits by reading Percy Greg's comical "History of the United States", or better still, the dear little story which Roswell Field wrote about "The Bondage of Ballinger".

Whether so famous a poem as Young's *Night Thoughts* is entitled to the privileges of the pit of Acheron, may be matter for dispute; but as Goldsmith said of those gloomy lucubrations, a reader speaks of them with exaggerated applause or contempt as his disposition "is either turned to mirth or melancholy". We have preserved "tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep", and "procrastination is the thief of time," but we know that the didactic parson's famous poem is "hardly ever read now except under compulsion." My chief grievance against the man who was compelled to

"Torture his invention
To flatter knaves or lose his pension,"

is not, however, founded upon his lugubrious pentameters.

The man who turns down the corner of the leaf of a book is not only fit for treason, stratagems and spoils, but is well qualified to commit any mean crime in the calendar. If his memory is so poor that he cannot re-

member page or passage, let him make a small pencil note on the margin. Such a note may readily be removed by an eraser, but a "dog's ear" can never be wholly removed. Its blight continues during the life of the book. Now Boswell records this sickening fact: "I have seen volumes of Dr. Young's copy of *The Rambler*, in which he has marked the passages which he thought particularly excellent, by folding down a corner of the page, and such as he rated in a super-eminent degree are marked by double folds. I am sorry that some of the volumes are lost." I do not share in this sorrow; it is well that the testimony of such brutality should be effaced. Double folds! Insatiate archer, would not one suffice? Perhaps Johnson himself, Virginius-like, destroyed his offspring thus shamelessly violated.

It is often difficult to get out of corners; but before I escape, let me give to the dog's earing, nocturnally reflecting Young, full credit for a single utterance—"Joy flies monopolists,"—which proves that it was not wholly in vain that he burned the midnight oil; for although he speaks in the present tense, it is manifest that the spirit of prophecy was strong within him. He looked ahead for more than a century and foresaw the day when "grafters" might be glorified and exalted, debauchees acclaimed us apostles of the people, and murderers feasted and honored, but monopolists hated, shunned and abhorred as miscreants whose sins can never be forgiven. Joyless indeed are those who dare to deprive their fellow beings of the inborn right to equality in everything; for we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created free and equal,—that is to say, with the right to do just as they please, to till the soil, to mine the earth, to invent the telegraph

and the telephone, to manufacture steel, and to construct railways, but not to do it so well as to prevent any of the great people from doing the same thing. The abandoned wretch who, by his despicable brains, his virtuous life, and his pernicious industry seeks to impair those rights in any degree, however trifling, must be prepared to bid farewell to happiness and contentment. If he is able to avoid the jail, it will be well for him to seek refuge in some secluded spot; let us say, in a peaceful library corner.

OF THE OLD FASHION

SPEAKING appreciatively a few nights ago at the club, concerning a recent magazine article on "Prescott, the Man," I was reminded by a youthful university graduate of only twenty-five years standing, that "Prescott is an old-fashioned historian."

There is much that is amusing in the attitude of the self-sufficient present towards the things of the past and there is also an element of the pathetic. I am often called an "old fogy," an epithet whose origin and derivation are uncertain, but whose meaning is reasonably plain. Nobody who ever had the name applied to him was oppressed by any doubt about its signification. Some authorities tell us that it comes from the Swedish *fogde*—one who has charge of a garrison,—but I question it despite the confident assertion of the *Century Dictionary*. It is not altogether inappropriate, because old fogies are compelled to hold the fort against all manner of abominations. They are the brakes on the electric cars of modern pseudo-progress. Thackeray speaks of "old Livermore, old Soy, old Chutney the East India director, old Cutler the surgeon,—that society of old fogies, in fine, who give each other dinners sound and round and dine for the mere purpose of guttling." So the term is always associated with the stupid and the ridiculous, used with regard to "elderly persons who have no sympathy with the amusements and pursuits of the young." Nobody ever refers to a young

fogy, although most of us know many exceedingly dull-witted young people who have no sympathy with the amusements and pursuits of the aged or even of the middle-aged. One class is no more worthy of contempt than the other. The adolescents who find their highest form of entertainment in "bridge" are at least as deserving of pity as the semi-centenarian who prefers to pass his evenings among his books and his pictures or to devote them to Shakespeare and the musical glasses. There are some delights about the library fire-side which compare favorably with those of the corridors of our most popular hostelry.

Certain kindly critics have insisted that my own literary tastes were acquired in the year 1850. I am not sure that the despised tastes formed in those commonplace, mid-century days are to be esteemed more highly than the tastes of our own self-satisfied times, but a good deal may be said in their favor. Perhaps the past is not always inferior to the present. There are varying opinions on the subject, from the familiar saying of Alfonso of Aragon, quoted by Melchior, immortalized by Bacon, and paraphrased by Goldsmith—that saying about old wood, old wine, old friends, and old authors—to the dogmatic declaration of Whittier that "still the new transcends the old." It may occur to antiquated minds that there are some elements of excellence about old plays compared with the dramatic works of this careless, *insouciant* time; that Wordsworth has some merits which are superior to those of the worthy gentleman who now fills the office of Laureate, and that possibly the poetry of the last few years is not entitled to boast itself greatly beside that of the early nineteenth century—the poetry of Scott, of Byron, of Shelley and of Keats. But we have the telephone and the trolley-car,

the automobile, the aeroplane, and the operation for appendicitis; and we admire our progress, the wonderful growth of the material, the mechanical, and the millionaire, while a few may pause to ask whether good taste and good manners have grown as greatly. Some of our older buildings for example are assuredly far better to look at than the lofty structures of steel which tower in lower New York and make of our streets darksome canons where the light of day scarcely penetrates and where the winds of winter roar wildly about our devoted heads as we struggle, hat-clutching, to our office doorways. May we not cite the City Hall and the Assay Office as honorable specimens of dignified architecture? There was something impressive too about the old "Tombs,"—replaced not long ago by a monstrosity—a structure which a lady recently told me was once referred to by an English friend who had never been in New York, as "the Westminster Abbey of America."

It is delightful to be young and to indulge in the illusions of youth—a truism which it is safe to utter, for nobody will dispute it. "Youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret," said the strange, semi-oriental personage, an enigma in politics and a problem in literature, Benjamin Disraeli. Everybody knows the rude saying of old George Chapman, which it is almost an impertinence to quote, but every one does not remember whence it came—that young men think the old men are fools but old men know young men are fools. It is certain that we have cherished that idea in our minds for many centuries. Pope, in his epigrammatic way, remarked that "in youth and beauty wisdom is but rare," but we cannot give him credit for originality in the utterance. We will go on with our regrets, our reproofs and our hesitations, and in the course of

time those who sneer at us now as cumbersome relics, *laudatores temporis acti*, mere maunderers enamored of an effete past, will take their turn, fill our places, and endure the pitying and condescending smiles of the succeeding generation. There is nothing new under the sun and the man of to-day may well pause in his arrogant career to remember that he will quickly pass into the category of the obsolete.

Some of us who are beginning to descend that downward slope of life which soon becomes sadly precipitous, but who retain a vivid recollection of the long-ago, are fond of recalling a period of New York which in this era of lavish expenditures, indiscriminating profuseness, and careless prodigality seems strangely simple. Those were the days when in sedate Second Avenue and Stuyvesant Square were the homes of dignified wealth, whose owners rather looked down upon Fifth Avenue as *parvenu*; and Forty-second Street was almost an outpost of civilization. We revelled in the delights of the ancient Philharmonic concerts and believed that Carl Bergmann was the last evolution of a conductor; later we recognized Theodore Thomas as the man who did more to develop a taste for good orchestral music in this country than any other one man who ever lived. We thronged the stalls of old Wallack's, with its most excellent of stock-companies—something which has wholly disappeared—and we rejoiced in Dion Boucicault and Agnes Robertson. A little later we haunted the upper gallery of the Academy of Music in Fourteenth Street—at least *I* did, because of a confirmed stringency in the money market,—and cheered the magical top-notes of the ponderous but melodious Wachtel and the generous tones of that most inspiring of singers, the splendid Parepa-Rosa. We hailed with

loud acclaims the manly and dignified Santley,—more in his element in oratorio than in opera—and the royal contralto, Adelaide Phillips, long since forgotten except by the Old Guard who afterwards transferred their allegiance to Annie Louise Cary. It may have been a provincial time, but we did not think so; it was a good time and we enjoyed it.

It seems but yesterday when all over the land flashed the news of Lincoln's death, and the black draperies suddenly shrouded the streets while the triumphant note of Easter Sunday died away in a cry of lamentation. I was in old St. Bartholomew's in Lafayette Place that Sunday, and the recollection of it will never be lost. Nor shall I forget the grief and alarm of a small band of Southerners, secessionists of the strongest type, domiciled in the same house with me, as they lamented that in the death of Abraham Lincoln, the South had been deprived of its best friend, the man who would have made reconstruction a blessing instead of an affliction. They had been rebels, it is true, but they were conscious of the loftiness of the soul of that noble citizen who, with faults which are often the accompaniments of greatness, stood for all that was just and magnanimous in our national life.

Some of us have a clear recollection of the camping of soldiers in City Hall Park, the cheering of the multitude as the regiments of volunteers swung down Broadway on their march to Virginia, when we were striving to preserve the republic and the horror of civil war was present with us every hour. We were less cynical, less ambitious, less strenuous in those days, and I think we were more serene and sincere. We had serious imperfections, but we did not carry ourselves quite as mightily, and on the whole we had some creditable characteristics.

There is no good reason why we should be ashamed of ourselves.

Were we so very stupid in the fifties? Was there not some true and honorable life in our social and literary world of that generation? Surely our newspapers were as worthy of respect as some of our contemporary journals with their blazing capitals, their columns of crime, their pages of the sensational, and their provoking condensed head-lines which exasperate me by their airy flippancy. I sometimes wonder that nobody except myself utters a protest against those dreadful headlines. They reduce almost everything to vulgarity, and the affection of condensation is distinctly irritating. Most objectionable of all are the headlines followed by interrogation points, because they are misleading. If, for example, they say in capitals "Mr. Smith strikes his mother?" the average reader—and there is more of that sort than of any other—glancing over the pages misses the query and goes to his grave with the firm conviction that poor Smith was the most unmanly of brutes. I am not sure that the interrogation mark protects the proprietors against a libel suit.

It is true that in the fifties our art may have been of the tame and tidy sort, timorously clinging to the conventional; our financial enterprises were conducted on so small a scale that a million was a sum which made the banker's heart palpitate with apprehensive emotion; our politics were concerned chiefly with the colored man and his relations to the State; in architecture our awful brown stone fronts were oppressing in a domineering way all the town in and above Fourteenth Street. But there was a certain dignity about it all, an absence of tawdriness, a savor of respectability.

Fourteenth Street! It must be difficult for the New

Yorkers of to-day who have not passed the half-century mark to realize that only fifty years ago it was really "up-town." It is easier to imagine the present Thomas Street as it was in 1815, a spot to be reached only after a bucolic journey through country lanes which my grandfather used to traverse on his way to the New York Hospital where he studied medicine. We think of that condition of things in about the same state of mind as that in which we contemplate the Roman Forum or the stony avenues of Pompeii. It amuses me to recall the period of the fifties and early sixties when the Hudson River Railroad had its terminus in Thirtieth Street near Tenth Avenue, but sent its cars, horse-drawn, to Chambers Streets and College Place just opposite old Ridley's, whose pictures were on those familiar inverted cones of never-to-be-forgotten candies, the virtues whereof have been proclaimed sonorously on railway trains from time immemorial, and that Chambers Street station will always live in the memory of old-fashioned people who used to "go to town" from rural neighborhoods. My aforesaid grandfather took me often, much to my joy, to visit his son in West Nineteenth Street, and the conservative old gentleman, who served as a surgeon under Commodore Charles Stewart on the good ship "Franklin," always went to Chambers Street and thence by the Sixth Avenue horse-railway to Nineteenth Street, which caused the pilgrimage to be unduly protracted, but we always reached our destination sooner or later—generally later. I remember that an idiotic notion possessed me that we were confined to traveling on West Broadway because country people were not allowed to encumber the real, the glorious Broadway, of whose omnibus-crowded splendors I caught but furtive glimpses by peering up the cross-streets. Another gen-

tleman of the old school, whom I loved sincerely, invariably proceeded from Thirtieth Street—and after the genesis of the Grand Central Station, from Forty-second Street—to the Astor House, from which venerable house of cheer he wended his way serenely to Union Square, or to Madison Square, or to any quarter where his business or his pleasure led him, however remote it might be from City Hall Park. To him the Astor House was practically the hub of the metropolis. These details may seem to be trivial, but they are characteristic of the old-fashioned men of half a century ago who still clung to the swallow-tailed coat as a garment to be worn by daylight. It never occurred to them to “take a cab,” possibly because there was no cab which a decent person would willingly occupy unless it had been ordered in advance from a livery stable. There are many reasons why this land of freedom—modified freedom—is preferable to any other land; but when we come to cabs, we must, in all fairness, admit the superiority of the London hansom over a New York “growler,” the hansoms now vanishing, we learn, before the all-conquering horde of motor-cars.

The old-fashioned magazines—how few ever turn their pages now, and yet how much in them is of interest, even to a casual reader. Far be it from me to whisper the slightest word of disparagement about our gorgeous and innumerable “monthlies,” with their pomp and pride of illustration, extending from text to the copious advertisements, those soul-stirring and lucrative adjuncts to a magazine of the present. Do not tell me that a man who buys the thick, paper-covered book does not read the advertisements; he pretends that he does not, but he does. According to my experience he follows them from soap to steam-yachts, from refriger-

ators to railway routes, but he would rather die than confess it. Much as I admire these products of our later civilization, I nevertheless maintain that there is more charm in an ancient number of any worthy periodical than is to be found in the latest issue. Time seems to add a mellow flavor to the good things of the past. There is not much to say in praise of the solemn *Whig Review* or of O'Sullivan's portentous *Democratic Review*, but take from the shelf a shabbily bound volume of *Graham's Magazine of Literature and Art*, published in the forties, and there will be discovered a wilderness of delights. The fashion-plates alone are dreams of comical beauty, and the steel plates of "The Shepherd's Love," "The Proffered Kiss," and "Lace Pattern with Embossed View" far surpass—in a sense—the boasted work of Pyle and of Abbey. What soul will decline to be thrilled at the lovely skit entitled "Born to Love Pigs and Chickens" by that butterfly of literature, Nathaniel Parker Willis, which you will find in the number of February, 1843. Consider the portrait of Charles Fenno Hoffman, with his exquisite coatlet, his wonderful legs attired in what appear to be tights, and his mild but intellectual countenance beaming upon us as he sits, bare-headed, upon a convenient stage rock, holding in one hand an object which may be a pie, a boxing-glove or a hat, according to the imagination of the beholder. Contemplate the list of contributors, including Bryant, Cooper, Longfellow, Lowell, and "Edgar A. Poe, Esq.," the "Esq." adding a delicious dignity to each of the illustrious names. It was only "sixty years since," but can any magazine of to-day rival that catalogue? Almost every one knows that Poe was editor of *Graham* for a year and that *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* as well as Longfellow's

Spanish Student first appeared in that magazine. Coming to a later day, recall the *Harper* of the fifties. No pleasure of the present can equal that which we felt when we revelled in Abbott's Napoleon which turned us lads into enthusiastic admirers of the great Emperor; or when we enjoyed the jovial Porte Crayon whose drawing was consistently as bad as Thackeray's, but whose fascinating humor had a quality peculiarly its own. Not long ago Mr. Janvier, to the gratification of the surviving members of the brotherhood of early *Harper* readers, gave to Strother the tribute of his judicious praise.

One may not gossip lightly about the *Atlantic*, but the *Knickerbocker* is distinctly old-fashioned. Longfellow's *Psalm of Life* first saw the light in its pages; immortal, even if Barrett Wendell does truthfully say that it is full not only of outworn metaphor but of superficial literary allusion. Old New York, adds Professor Wendell, expressed itself in our first school of renascent writing, which withered away with the *Knickerbocker Magazine*. But there was a Knickerbocker school, and the brothers Willis and Gaylord Clark helped to sustain its glories. The magazine began in 1832, faded in 1857 and died in 1864; and out of it sprang many of the authors whose names are inseparably associated with a golden period of our literature.

It was only a short time ago that one of the men of those by-gone times departed this life, and the scanty mention of him in the public press compelled a sad recognition of the familiar truth that in order to retain popular attraction one must pose perpetually under the lime-light. Parke Godwin, who belonged to the order of scholarly, high-minded Americans, had outlived his fame, except among the Centurions of West Forty-third

Street and a few old people of the same class. Perhaps he did not concentrate his powers sufficiently. Editor, writer of political essays, author of *Vala, a Mythological Tale*, biographer of his father-in-law, William Cullen Bryant, and by virtue of his *History of France*, historian,—but he published only one volume more than forty years ago and then abandoned the task—he had that broad culture which sometimes disperses itself and fails to win for its possessor the highest place in the literary hierarchy. He was a delightful example of what we now regard as the old-fashioned and his address on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Century Club is a mine of good things for one who is interested in the past of New York. “I have stood once more” said he “beside the easel of Cole as he poured his ideal visions of the Voyage of Life and the Course of Empire in gorgeous colors upon the canvas. I have seen the boyish Kensett trying to infuse his own refinement and sweetness into the wild woods of the wold. I have watched the stately Gifford as he brought the City of the Sea out of its waters, in a style that Cavaletto and Ziem would envy and with a brilliancy of color that outshone even its native Italian skies. I have stood beside the burly Leutze as he portrayed our Washington among the ice of the Delaware, or depicted the multitudinous tramp of immigrants making their western way through the wilderness to the shores of the Oregon, that ‘hears no sound save its own dashings.’ All have come back for a moment, but they are gone, oh whither? Into the silent land, says Von Salis; yet how silent it is! We speak to them but they answer us not again.” He brought back to us the beginning of things, when he told us of the incipient conditions of the Academy of Design. “They took a room—was it suggestive?—in the

old Alms House in the Park, and they worked under a wick dipped in whale-oil which gave out more smoke than light." He spoke of Halleck, of Gulian Verplanck, of Bryant, of Charles Fenno Hoffman, of Robert C. Sands, and of old Tristram Burges, "who had swallowed Lemprière's Classical Dictionary;" and he closed with a brief flight of eloquence such as in these days of new-fashioned chilliness it is seldom vouchsafed to us to hear.

Of the same order was William Allen Butler, the friend of Halleck and of Duyckinck, of Andrew Jackson and of Martin Van Buren who knew Samuel Rogers and visited him in London. He was nine years the junior of Godwin. He might have won the highest eminence in the world of books if he had not made the law his chief occupation and literature only his recreation. The bar does not among its rewards number that of enduring fame, unless occasionally some great political or criminal trial perpetuates the name of the advocate chiefly concerned in it. Of course, Mr. Butler's early essay in verse, "Nothing to Wear," will never be entirely forgotten. A humorous skit as it was, its enduring merit is shown by the fact that in spite of the old-fashioned terms descriptive of woman's dress and of the fashionable life of fifty years ago, in its general tone it is curiously contemporaneous. Scarcely less witty and amusing were his poems, "General Average" and "The Sexton and the Thermometer," the former being more highly esteemed by many than its popular predecessor. I suppose that he left it out of the later collection of his poems because, with his gentle and kindly nature, he feared that a few of its passages might give offense to some of his friends of the Jewish faith whom he esteemed and respected. His translations of

Uhland are marked by graceful and poetic fervor, and his prose style was lucidity itself. His humor, always attractive and appropriate, lightened even his most serious work, from an address on Statutory Law to an argument in the Supreme Court in Washington City. It was well said of him by a jurist now living, that "no man of his time, either in England or America, held an equally high rank both as a lawyer and a literary man."

Another of the old-fashioned literary men, who was however considerably the senior of both Godwin and Butler, was George Perkins Morris, who died in 1864. He was at once a general of militia, an editor, a favorite song-writer, and the composer of an opera libretto. His title to immortality rests mainly upon the sentimental verses known as "Woodman, Spare that Tree," which had a flavor about them very dear to our grandparents. To look at his manly countenance in the portrait engraved by Hollyer (who at the present writing is still extant and vigorous) after the Elliott painting, we can scarcely imagine him as the author of such lines as "Near the Lake Where Drooped the Willow," "We Were Boys Together," "Land-Ho," "Long Time Ago" and "Whip-poor-will." But James Grant Wilson says that for above a score of years he could, any day, exchange one of his songs unread for a fifty dollar cheque, when some of *literati* of New York (possibly Poe) could not sell anything for the one-fifth part of that sum. In the presence of Morris, I confess I cannot quite give myself up to adoring admiration of the taste of our predecessors. This stanza indicates his ordinary quality:

The star of love now shines above,
Cool zephyrs crisp the sea;
Among the leaves, the wind-harp weaves
Its serenade for thee.

Notwithstanding this rather trifling vein, admirably satirized by Orpheus C. Kerr, and a certain tone of commonplace, Morris had a genuine lyrical quality in his verse although it was devoid of startling bursts of inspiration, and English literature affords many examples of less deserving poesy. Morris was an industrious editor, appreciative of others, and he had a personal charm which endeared him to those who had the good fortune to come within the pale of his friendship, and particularly to those who were permitted to enjoy the generous hospitality of his sweet and dignified home at Undercliff opposite West Point. Smile as we may at his little conceits and his obvious rhymes, we must recognize the sincere and genial nature of the kindly General, so long conspicuous in the social and literary life of old New York.

These men, it may be said, do not prove the permanent value of the literature of the fifties. Godwin and Morris were editors and Butler a busy lawyer, none of them able to give their undivided attention to authorship. I suppose that Irving and Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, Hawthorne and Bayard Taylor were more distinctly the ornaments of the time, and there are other names which more judicious and discriminating men might substitute for some of those I have chosen. Bayard Taylor's greatest work was done in later years, but he had already won his first fame—not a giant, but a poet with "the spontaneity of a born singer," as Stedman said. Irving, the most charming and amiable of writers, had not the most forceful intellect, but he was calm and graceful, with a gentle and bewitching humor and a strong appreciation of the beautiful—a good man, beloved and honored at home and abroad. His fame is paler now than it was forty years gone by, but

he has the immortality of a classic. Emerson had a powerful influence over the minds of men, but viewed in the perspective of time, he does not loom so largely now. I am not competent to venture far into the territory of criticism, having only the equipment of a general reader who timidly expresses his personal feelings and leaves to trained and experienced judges the task of scientific analysis; but we general readers are the jury, after all.

As time slips by there is a tendency to merge the decades of the past, and to the young people of 1909 the period of 1850-1860 is every bit as remote as the period of 1830-1840. The university undergraduate does not differentiate between the alumnus of 1870 and him of 1855, as I know by experience. A melancholy illustration of this well-known fact was afforded of late in a popular play, the scene of which was laid in a time supposed to be exceedingly far distant, and the programme announced it as "the early eighties." The representation was enlivened by such antiquated melodies as "Old Zip Coon," "Maryland, My Maryland," and "Old Dan Tucker," as well as "Pretty as a Picture," "Ye Merry Birds," and "How Fair Art Thou," all as appropriate to the early eighties as Dr. Arne's "Where the Bee Sucks" and "Rule Britannia." It was almost as abominably anachronistic as the naive declaration of a pseudo-Princetonian who asserted a membership in the Class of 1879 and assured me that he had been, while in college, a devoted disciple of Doctor Eliphalet Nott. If I have mingled my old-fashioned decades unduly, it has been because of that tendency to merger which no Sherman Act can suppress.

Few there are who cling with affection to the memory of the old-fashioned. Most of us prefer to spin with the

world down the ringing grooves of change, to borrow the shadow of a phrase which has itself become old-fashioned. The flaming sword of the Civil War severed the latest century of America in two unequal parts, and its fiery blade divided the old and the new as surely and as cleanly as the guillotine cleft apart the France of the old monarchy from the France of modern days. To stray back in recollection to the land of fifty years ago is almost like treading the streets of some mediæval town. But for some of us there is a melancholy pleasure in the retrospect and a lingering fondness for the life which we thought so earnest and so vigorous then, but which now seems so placid and so drowsy.

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

REVIEWERS, critics and students of literature are inclined to resent the assertion with respect to a writer once eminent, that he is substantially forgotten. But it is safe to say that if we regard the millions of readers in this country whose literary nutriment is made up chiefly of works of fiction or of biography of the lighter sort, as "the reading public of America", the name of William Harrison Ainsworth is by no means familiar in the United States. There are many book-owners who keep his "Works" upon their shelves, and know the backs of the volumes, and some of the omnivorous have doubtless read "Jack Sheppard", "Crichton", "The Tower of London", and perhaps "Rookwood"; yet thousands who are well acquainted with their Scott, their Dickens and their Thackeray would be sorely puzzled if they were asked to tell us who Ainsworth was, and exactly when he lived, or to give a synopsis of the plot of a single one of his numerous stories; and he has been dead not quite thirty years.

Allibone gives him but fourteen lines of biography, mostly bitter censure, with a few words of qualified praise for such historical tales as "St. Paul's" and "The Tower". The indifference to him is not limited to general readers or to America. Chamber's *Encyclopaedia of English Literature* begrudges him twenty-nine lines of depreciative comment, conceding to him dramatic art and power, but denying to him "originality

or felicity of humor or character". He is not even mentioned in Mr. Edmund Gosse's *Modern English Literature*, and Taine does not condescend to give his name. In the *History* of Nicoll and Seccombe no reference to him can be found. In the pretentious volumes of the *History of English Literature* edited by Garnett and Gosse a portrait of him is given with a rough draft of a Cruikshank drawing; and this is what is said of him: "A very popular exponent of the grotesque and the sensational in historical romance was William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882), a Manchester solicitor, who wrote *Rookwood*, 1834, *Jack Sheppard*, 1839, and *The Tower of London*, 1840. He was a sort of Cruikshank of the pen, delighting in violent and lurid scenes, crowded with animated figures". This is rather an absurd mess of misinformation. One would scarcely believe that there was a time when he was esteemed to be a worthy rival of Charles Dickens, and when in the eyes of the critics and of the public he far outshone Edward Lytton Bulwer.

In a note to the sketch in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Mr. W. E. A. Axon says that "no biography of Ainsworth has appeared or is likely to be published." The fact is correctly stated, but the prediction may not be fulfilled. In 1902, Mr. Axon himself expanded the *Dictionary* article and made it into an excellent memoir of forty-three pages, but only a few copies were printed. It contains five portraits. A devoted admirer of Ainsworth has been for some years engaged in the preparation of an extended biography. I do not give his name, for he probably prefers to make the announcement at his own time and in his own way. A few years ago I became the possessor of a considerable number of autographic relics of Ainsworth, includ-

ing a memorandum book and a manuscript volume containing an account of his travels in Italy in 1830, dedicated to his wife, with a poem; some letters to him from Cruikshank; thirty-six pages of the draft of "Jack Sheppard", and more than two hundred of his own letters. It is gratifying to know that my friend who is at work on the "Life" has been aided by this little collection.

The only published records of Ainsworth's life, other than those to which I have referred, are, as far as I have been able to discover, a brief memoir by Laman Blanchard which appeared in the *Mirror* in 1842 and was reproduced in later editions of "Rookwood"; a chapter in Madden's *Life of Lady Blessington*; a sketch by James Crossley contributed to the Routledge edition of the *Ballads* in 1855; and an account of him by William Bates, accompanying a semi-caricature portrait in the *Maclise Portrait Gallery*.

Ainsworth was born in his father's house on King Street, Manchester, February 4, 1805. His family was "respectable" in the English sense, for his grandfather on his mother's side was a Unitarian minister, and his father a prosperous solicitor. It was from the mother that he inherited in 1842 some "landed property" to use another distinctively English phrase, and it is amusing to observe the pride of Madden when he boasts that Ainsworth's name appears in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. He attended the Free Grammar School in Manchester, where it is said that he was proficient in Latin and Greek, and as he was expected to succeed to his father's practice, he became an articled clerk in the office of Mr. Alexander Kay, at the age of sixteen. He was a handsome boy, full of ambition, but his ambition did not lead him in the dull and dusty paths which solicitors tread. He had already written a drama, for

private production, which was printed in *Arliss's Magazine*, and a number of sketches, translations and minor papers for a serial called *The Manchester Iris*, and he subsequently conducted a periodical styled *The Boeotian*, which had a short existence of six months. Before he was nineteen, he was a regular contributor to the *London Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Magazine*. Some of these youthful efforts were collected in "December Tales" (1823), which also contained sketches by James Crossley and John Partington Aston. In 1822 he issued a pamphlet of "Poems, by Cheviot Tichborn", which as Mr. Axon informs us, is quite distinct from another pamphlet called "The Works of Cheviot Tichburn", printed in 1825, apparently for private circulation.

The Tichborn book of verses was dedicated to Charles Lamb. The author was a devoted admirer of Elia, and as early as 1822 Lamb had lent him a copy of Cyril Tournour's play or plays. On May 7, 1822, Lamb wrote to him a letter, (printed in *The Lambs*, by William Carew Hazlitt, 1897) referring to the book and saying, among other things, "I have read your poetry with pleasure. The tales are pretty and prettily told. It is only sometimes a little careless, I mean as to redundancy." The letter mentions the proposed dedication deprecatingly and modestly.

Talfourd, Canon Ainger and Fitzgerald in their collections give two other letters, written respectively on December 9 and December 29, 1823, one thanking Ainsworth for "books and compliments," and the other giving Lamb-like excuses for not leaving beloved London to pay a visit to Manchester.* It was something of an honor for a lad of seventeen to receive the praise

*See Temple Bar Edition, iii, 51-52.

of Charles Lamb, who appears to have discovered one of his young correspondent's besetting sins—redundancy. But it may not have meant much, for in those days they exchanged compliments more profusely than is customary at the present time.

All these excursions in the field of authorship were fatal to the grave study of the law, for which he had no taste, and although when his father died in 1824 he went to London to finish his term with Mr. Jacob Phillips of the Inner Temple, it was a foregone conclusion that, whatever his career might be, it would not be that of a solicitor. About 1826, one John Ebers, a publisher in Bond Street, and also manager of the Opera House, brought out a novel called "Sir John Chiverton," which received the favor of Sir Walter Scott, who said of it in his diary (October 17, 1826), that he had read it with interest, and that it was "a clever book," at the same time asserting that he himself was the originator of the style in which it was written. For many years it was supposed that Ainsworth was its sole author, but it was claimed in 1877 by Mr. John Partington Aston, a lawyer, who had been a fellow-clerk of Ainsworth's in Mr. Kay's office, and the book was probably the result of collaboration. The dedicatory verses are supposed to have been addressed to Anne Frances Ebers, John Ebers' daughter, whom Ainsworth married on October 11, 1826. Soon afterwards he seems to have been occupied in editing one of those absurd "Annuals" so common in those days, for we find Tom Moore recording in his journal in 1827, that he had been asked to edit the *Forget-Me-Not* to begin with the second number, "as the present editor is Mr. Ainsworth (I think), the son-in-law of Ebers." The compensation offered to Moore was £500, which indicates that such work was

paid for liberally, but it is not likely that Ainsworth received as much. A year or so after the marriage—within a year in fact—he followed his father-in-law's advice and became himself a publisher and a book-seller; but at the end of eighteen months he decided to abandon the business.

If we may judge by one of the letters in my collection, it is not surprising that he was not overwhelmingly successful. He writes to Thomas Hill for a notice in the *Chronicle* of a book the copyright of which he had recently purchased, adding, "the work is really a most scientific one—indeed the only distinct treatise on Confectionery extant." Perhaps this was the work of Ude, the cook, whose publisher he was; but he also "brought out" Caroline Norton as an author, of whom he writes to Charles Ollier, in his graceful, rather lady-like chirography:

"Is it not possible [to] get me a short notice of the enclosed into the new Monthly? By so doing you will infinitely oblige one of the most beautiful women in the world—the Hon. Mrs. Norton, the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan."

In 1827 he published for Thomas Hood two volumes of "National Tales," which are said to be the poorest books written by Hood. Christopher North said of them: "I am glad to see that they are published by Mr. Ainsworth to whom I wish all success in his new profession. He is himself a young gentleman of talents, and his Sir John Chiverton is a spirited and romantic performance."*

It was for an annual issued by him that Sir Walter Scott wrote the "Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee," and the

*Blackwood, April, 1827.

story is told by Mr. Axon that Sir Walter received twenty guineas for it, but laughingly handed them over to the little daughter of Lockhart, at whose house he and Ainsworth met. He wrote some fragmentary and miscellaneous prose and verse, not of much importance; and in 1828 he travelled through Belgium and up the Rhine, going to Switzerland and Italy in 1830. The manuscript note-books which lie before me, the paper foxed and the ink faded, comprise a diary of the Italian part of the journey. I have toiled over the one hundred and sixty-eight pages, not always easily decipherable, but have found little which exceeds in value the ordinary guide-book of our own time. It was, we must remember, written only for his wife—whom he considerably left at home—and the dedicatory poem to her, consisting of fifty-eight unrhymed lines, written in Venice in September, 1830, is quite as commonplace as might be expected from a man of twenty-five, with little poetic inspiration but endowed with much verbal fluency, who was not writing for publication.

Soon after his return from the Continent, Ainsworth began the work from which he was to derive his chief title to fame—the composing of novels. It has been said that he was inspired by Mrs. Radcliffe, whose gloomy mysteries, weird scenes, and supernatural machinery once made her a favorite with fiction-lovers, and that he sought to adapt old legends to English soil. Others have ascribed his impulse to the influence of the French dramatic romancers, Eugène Sue, Victor Hugo, and Alexandre Dumas. I question whether he owed his inspiration to any particular source, although all these writers may have affected his temperament. Perhaps he unconsciously divined the needs of the reading public, of which his editorial experience may have taught him

much. The inane, fashionable novel had become tiresome. Moreover, it was a time, in the early thirties, when the nation of England was absorbed in the growth of her material prosperity, and when a country is engrossed in commerce and manufactures, in the production of wealth, tales of adventure seem necessary to stimulate flagging imagination. We have seen the evidence of it in our own land during the past ten years, when casting aside the metaphysical, the psychological, the long drawn-out analyses of character, the public eagerly devoured story after story of fights and wars, and daring deeds, whose lucky authors bore off rewards of fabulous amount and grew rich upon the royalties earned by their hundreds of thousands of copies.

We are told by Mr. Axon that "the inspiration came to him when on a visit to Chesterfield in 1831". He had visited Cuckfield Place, thought by Shelley to be "like bits of Mrs. Radcliffe", and it occurred to Ainsworth that he might make something of an English story constructed upon similar lines. Begun in 1831, his "Rookwood" was published in 1834. It has generally been considered by critics to be a powerful but uneven story, and it leaped at once into popularity, carrying with it the youthful author. "The Romany Chant" and "Dick Turpin's Ride to York" were the chief features; but the Ride was the thing, like the chariot race in *Ben-Hur*. It was actually dashed off in the glow of enthusiasm, the white heat of imagination. It was, says George Augustus Sala, "a piece of word painting rarely if ever surpassed in the prose of the Victorian Era,"* and he said this sixty years after the

*Sala's *Life and Adventures* (1896) 83.

novel appeared. Ainsworth has told us the circumstances. "I wrote it" he said "in twenty-four hours of continuous work. I had previously arranged the meeting at Kilburn Wells, and the death of Tom King—a work of some little time—but from the moment I got Turpin on the high road, I wrote on and on till I landed him at York. I performed this literary feat, as you are pleased to call it, without the slightest sense of effort. I began in the morning, wrote all day, and as night wore on, my subject had completely mastered me, and I had no power to leave Turpin on the high road. I was swept away by the curious excitement and novelty of the situation; and being personally a good horseman, passionately fond of horses, and possessed moreover of accurate knowledge of a great part of the country, I was thoroughly at home with my work, and galloped on with my pet highwayman merrily enough. I must, however, confess that when my work was in proof, I went over the ground between London and York to verify the distances and localities, and was not a little surprised at my accuracy." This *tour de force*—the composition of a hundred novel pages in so short a time, was performed at "The Elms," a house at Kilburn where he was then living. It brings to mind the familiar story of Beckford, writing *Vathek* in French, in a single sitting of three days and two nights, which is more or less apochryphal.

It is a proof of the merit and of the success of this chapter that, like many other successful literary efforts, it was "claimed" by some one else. Mr. Bates refers rather indignantly to an assertion of R. Shelton Mackenzie, made upon the authority of Dr. Kenealy, and contained in the fifth volume of an American edition of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, that Doctor William Maginn,

of convivial fame, wrote the "Ride" as well as all the slang songs in "Rookwood." But Maginn was seldom sober and doubtless he bragged in his cups. Kenealy believed in Arthur Orton, the Tichborne "claimant," and was capable of believing in any claimant, particularly if he was an Irishman; while Mackenzie was not celebrated for acumen or accuracy. Sala says of the absurd tale: "As to the truth or falsehood of this allegation I am wholly incompetent to pronounce; but looking at Ainsworth's striking and powerful pictures of the Plague and the Fire in his 'Old St. Paul's,' and the numerous studies of Tudor life in his 'Tower of London,' I should say that 'Turpin's Ride to York' was a performance altogether within the compass of his capacity."

In the light of later years, it is interesting to observe the comparisons made between Bulwer and Ainsworth. In *Fraser's Magazine* for June, 1834, there is a review of "Rookwood" in which the author is praised far beyond the writer of *Eugene Aram* and *Paul Clifford*. Bulwer, according to Sala, was fated "to be beaten on his own ground by another writer of fiction very much his inferior in genius; but who was nevertheless endowed with a considerable amount of melodramatic power, and who had acquired a conspicuous facility for dramatic description." It may be that the defeat drove Bulwer to those other fields in which he won the reputation which has preserved his name while that of his conqueror of seventy years ago has faded sadly.

It was erroneously believed by many that Ainsworth must have had some personal acquaintance with low life in London because of the ease with which he dealt with the thieves' jargon, but his knowledge of it was but

second-hand for he obtained it from the autobiography of James Hardy Vaux.* A second edition of "Rookwood" illustrated by George Cruikshank, appeared in 1836.

Ainsworth was now a conspicuous man, and his celebrity as an author, combined with his personal attractions, made him a welcome guest at many houses, notably at Gore House, where Lady Blessington so long held sway—"jolly old girl", he calls her in one of my letters, written in 1836. The beauty at forty-seven was as fascinating as ever. "Everybody goes to Lady Blessington's", says Haydon in his *Diary*. The effervescent Sala tells of meeting Ainsworth there in a later time. "I think", he says, "that on the evening in question there were present, among others, Daniel Maclise, the painter, and Ainsworth, the novelist. The author of "Jack Sheppard" was then a young man of about thirty, very handsome, but somewhat of the curled and oiled and glossy-whiskered D'Orsay type". The D'Orsay type was by no means distasteful to my lady. Sala relates at second-hand the anecdote about Lady Blessington placing herself between D'Orsay and Ainsworth, and saying that she had for supporters the two handsomest men in London.

He was a favorite contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*, and his portrait appears among "The Fraserians", indeed a goodly company, for there are Coleridge, Southey, James Hogg, Lockhart, D'Orsay, Thackeray, Carlyle, Washington Irving, Sir David Brewster, and Theodore Hook, with many others. In the letter-press which accompanied the portrait,—supposed to have

*Ayon's Memoir, xxiii: *The World*, March 28, 1878.

been written by Maginn—the Magazine says: “May he turn out many novels better, none worse, than ‘Rockwood’; may he, as far as is consistent with the frailty of humanity, penetrate puffery, and avoid the three insatiableness of Solomon, King of Israel.”

In 1837, “Crichton” was published, the hero being James Crichton, the “Admirable”, about whose name has grown so much that is fabulous, but who was nevertheless a real person. The story was illustrated by Hablôt K. Browne. It was fairly successful; some regard it as in many respects his best novel; but while it did not add materially to his fame, it did not diminish it. It was well done; the author spared no pains and as usual with him was careful in his researches. In the introductory essay and in the appendices, which Sidney Lee pronounces “very interesting”, he re-printed, with translations in verse, Crichton’s Elegy on Borromeo and the eulogy on Visconti. Madden intimates that D’Orsay occasionally figured as the model of the accomplished hero. The author received £350 for the book—more than for “Rookwood”. He had become a figure in the literary world and his name was something with which to conjure.

In January, 1837, Richard Bentley began the publication of *Bentley’s Miscellany* under the editorship of Charles Dickens. There is a familiar story that the name originally proposed was “The Wit’s Miscellany,” and that when the change was mentioned in the presence of “Ingoldsby” Barham (not Douglas Jerrold, as often supposed), he remarked “Why go to the other extreme?” In January, 1839, Dickens turned over the office of editor to Ainsworth, with “a familiar epistle from a parent to his child”.* *Oliver Twist* had just

*Forster’s Dickens, i. 141.

been the feature of the *Miscellany*, and now Ainsworth made his second and most celebrated venture in what Sala calls "felonious fiction"—the immortal "Jack Sheppard."

There are some conflicting statements about dates. Madden says, in one place, "In 1841 he [Ainsworth] became the editor of 'Bentley's Miscellany,'" and on the next page, "In the spring of 1839 he replaced Dickens in the editorship of 'Bentley's Miscellany,' and continued as editor till 1841."* He also says that in 1839 the novel, to be called "Thames Darrell," was advertised to appear periodically in the *Miscellany*, then edited by Charles Dickens.† Robert Harrison in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (title Bentley) says that Dickens retired from the post of editor in January, 1839. Mr. Axon tells us in the *Dictionary* that Ainsworth became the editor in March, 1840, but in the "Memoir" he assigns the event to the year 1838. Forster puts the date 1839, which seems to be correct, and the discrepancies are no doubt susceptible of explanation. The first number of "Jack Sheppard" appeared in the number for January, 1839.

The success of "Rookwood" and *Oliver Twist* led to the new essay in the series which the sanctimonious Allibone says might be very appropriately published under the title of the "Tyburn Plutarch"—not a very sane or witty remark in my opinion. Ainsworth cast over the scamp Jack Sheppard the mantle of romance, and made him "a dashing young blood of illicitly noble descent, who dressed sumptuously and lived luxuriously"—whose escapes from Newgate and other adventures were

*Life of Lady Blessington, iii. 226, 227.

†*Idem.*, iii. 224.

described with a charm and vigor which took the public captive. The sale exceeded even that of *Oliver Twist*, and no fewer than eight versions were produced upon the London stage. Mr. Keeley achieved great notoriety as the hero, and Paul Bedford first made his mark in the character of Blueskin.

It was not until these dramatic productions appeared that the sedate and fastidious began the outcry against the so-called criminal school of romance; an outcry perpetuated in Chambers' *Encyclopaedia* and in Allibone's *Dictionary*. The author and the novel were bitterly attacked. The main ground of denunciation seems to have been the belief that the lower orders might be aroused to emulate the brilliant robber, all of which is sheer nonsense. I am tempted to quote at length from a letter of Miss Mitford, the personification of an old maid, because it contains an epitome of the adverse criticism as well as a little biographical note which I have not encountered elsewhere.

"I have been reading 'Jack Sheppard,' " she writes to Miss Barrett,* "and have been struck by the great danger in these times, of representing authorities so constantly and fearfully in the wrong; so tyrannous, so devilish, as the author has been pleased to portray it in 'Jack Sheppard,' for he does not seem so much a man or even an incarnate fiend, as a representation of power—government or law, call it as you may—the ruling power. Of course, Mr. Ainsworth had no such design, but such is the effect; and as the millions who see it represented at the minor theatres will not distinguish between now and a hundred years back, all the Chartist in the land are less dangerous than this nightmare

*January 3, 1840: Letters, Am. Edition, 1870, ii. p. 218.

of a book, and I, Radical as I am, lament any additional temptations to outbreak, with all its train of horrors. Seriously, what things these are—the Jack Sheppards, and Squeers's, and *Oliver Twists*, and Michael Armstrongs—all the worse for the power which except the last, the others contain! Grievously the worse! My friend, Mr. Hughes, speaks well of Mr. Ainsworth. His father was a collector of these old robber stories, and used to repeat the local ballads upon Turpin, etc., to his son as he sat upon his knee; and this has perhaps been at the bottom of the matter. A good antiquarian I believe him to be, but what a use to make of the picturesque old knowledge! Well, one comfort is that it will wear itself out; and then it will be cast aside like an old fashion."

The latter part of the prophecy has come very near to fulfillment; but we have no proof that the awful novel caused any marked increase of crime. The real utility and value of stories like "Jack Sheppard" may well be questioned, for they surely do not belong to the highest and best in literature, but that any one became a thief or a highway robber because of them is yet to be demonstrated.

It was said, and Ainsworth believed it, that the fact that "Jack Sheppard" had a better sale than *Oliver Twist* was the cause of some falling-off in the friendship which had existed between him and John Forster, who adored Dickens; and it is true that the *Examiner*, of which paper Forster was the chief literary critic, made an attack on the book. It is odd that Forster should have met Dickens for the first time at Ainsworth's house.* There was some sort of friction among the three friends about the time when "Jack Sheppard" was

*Forster's *Life of Dickens*, I, 118.

in the full tide of favor and Dickens was closing the troublesome negotiations with Bentley about the copyright of the unpublished *Barnaby Rudge*. A letter of Dickens to Ainsworth in my collection throws some light upon the matter. As it has never been printed, to the best of my knowledge, and as it cannot fail to be of interest to Dickens-lovers, I may be pardoned for giving it in full:

“Doughty Street,

Tuesday morning, March 26th, 1839.

My dear Ainsworth:

If the subject of this letter or anything contained in it, should eventually become the occasion of any disagreement between you and me, it would cause me very deep and sincere regret. But with this contingency—even this—before me, I feel that I must speak out without reserve and that every manly, honest and just consideration compels me to do so.

By some means—by what means in the first instance I scarcely know—the late negotiations between yourself, myself and Mr. Bentley have placed a mutual friend of ours in a false position and one in which he has no right to stand; and exposed him to an accusation—very rife and current indeed just now—equally untrue and undeserved, namely that he, who a short time before had pledged himself to Mr. Bentley (in the presence of Mr. Follett) to see my last agreement with that person executed and carried out, counselled me to break it and in fact entangled and entrapped the innocent and unsuspecting bookseller—who being all honesty himself had a child-like confidence in others—into taking such steps as led to that result.

Now I wish to remind you—for a purpose which I will tell you presently—that even by me no agreement whatever was broken; that I demanded a postponement of my agreement for the term of six months—that Forster (to whom I have been alluding of course)

expressly and positively said when you pressed upon me the hardship of my relations with that noblest work of God, in New Burlington Street, that he could not and would not be any party to a new disruption between us—that *he was bound to see the old agreement performed*—that he wrote to Mr. Bentley warning him of my dissatisfaction—that he saw Mr. Bentley for a full hour, in his own rooms (a man must be in earnest to do that)—read to him a letter of mine in which I had expressed my feelings on the subject, and strongly urged upon him the necessity and propriety of some concession—that Mr. Bentley went away thanking him and appointing to call again—that he never called again—that he wrote me an insulting letter dictated by his lawyers—that Forster then washed his hands of any further interference between us—that Mr. Bentley then went out to you at Kensal Green—and that you and he, between you, and without any previous consultation or advising with Forster settled upon certain terms and conditions which were afterwards proposed to me through you, and communicated to Forster, for the first time and to his unbounded astonishment, by both of us.

I remind you of all this because Mr. Bentley is going about town stating in every quarter what may or may not be his real impression of Forster's course—because Mr. Bentley does not appeal as an authority to you—because you do countenance Mr. Bentley in these proceedings by hearing him express his opinion of Forster and not contradicting him—and have aggravated him, indeed, by such thoughtless acts as first procuring an unfavorable notice of the Miscellany in the Examiner (by dint of urgent solicitations) and then shewing it to him with assumed vexation and displeasure. I remind you of all this, because Forster must and shall be set right—not with Mr. Bentley but with the men to whom these stories are carried and his friends as well as foes—because there are but two persons who can set him right—and because I wish to know distinctly from you who shall do so, *without the delay of an instant*—you or I.

There is another reason which renders this absolutely necessary. Forster, acting for Mr. Savage Landor, arranged with Mr. Bentley for the publication of two tragedies by that gentleman, which were proceeding rapidly through the press when these matters occurred, and have since been taken from the printers by Mr. Bentley—not published, though the time agreed upon is long past; not advertised, though they should have been long ago—their existence not recognized in anyway—and all this as a means of annoyance and revenge against Forster who is placed in the most painful situation with regard to Mr. Landor that it is possible to conceive. Mr. Landor who holds such men as Mr. Bentley in as little consideration as the mud of the streets, and who is violent and reckless when exasperated, is as certain by some public act to punish the bookseller for this treatment (if he be not prevented by an immediate atonement) as the sun is to rise to-morrow. This would entail upon me the immediate necessity, in explanation of the circumstances which led to it, of laying a full history of these proceedings before the public, and the consequence would be that we and our private affairs would be dragged into newspaper notoriety and involved in controversy and discussion, for the pain of which nothing could ever compensate.

But however painful it will be to me to put myself in communication once again with Mr. Bentley, and openly appeal to you to confirm what I shall tell him, I have no alternative unless you will frankly and openly and for the sake of *your* old friend as well as my intimate and valued one, avow to Mr. Bentley yourself that he is not to blame, that you heard him again and again refuse to interfere although deeply impressed with the hardship of my case—and that you proposed concessions which he—feeling the position in which he stood—could not have suggested. Believe me, Ainsworth, that for your sake no less than on Forster's account, this should be done. You do not see it I know, you do not mean it I am persuaded, but he is impressed with the idea, and nine men out of ten would be (if these

matters were stated by anybody but you) that to enable yourself to gain your object and stand in your present relations towards Mr. Bentley, you have used him as an instrument by suppressing that which would have shewn his conduct in the best and truest light, and have shrunk from the friendly and manly avowal of feeling which your own impulses and freer and less worldly considerations so generously prompted.

Once more let me say that I do not mean to hurt or offend you by anything I have said, and that I should be truly grieved to find I have done so. But I must speak strongly because I feel strongly, and because I have a misgiving that even now I have been silent too long.

My dear Ainsworth, I am

Faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.

William Ainsworth Esquire."

The little quarrel, if it was a quarrel, must have been composed amicably, for Forster in his *Life of Dickens* refers several times to Ainsworth in a kind and appreciative way.

In 1840 Ainsworth and George Cruikshank brought out the "Tower of London" in monthly numbers, and were equal partners in the enterprise. It has always been regarded as a work of merit. In 1841 the author received £1000 from the *Sunday Times* for "Old St. Paul's", and it was later one of Cruikshank's grievances that he was not associated in this production, the idea of which he insisted was his own. Among my letters is one written by Cruikshank to Ainsworth on the subject, which has not, as far as I know, been published, and I give it because it reveals the relations of the two men quite distinctly.

"Amwell St., March 4, 1841.

MY DEAR AINSWORTH:—

Mr. Pettigrew called here yesterday and stated your proposition. Had that proposal been made any time between last December up to about a fortnight back I should have been happy, *most* happy, to have accepted the offer—but now I am sorry to say, but I cannot—no, I have so far committed myself with various parties that if I were to withdraw my projected publication I am sure that I should be a laughing stock to some and what is worse—I fear that with others I should lose all title to honor or integrity. I do assure you, my dear Ainsworth, I sincerely regret—that I cannot join you in this work, but what was I to think—what conclusion was I to come to but that you had *cut* me. At the latter end of last year you announced that *we* were preparing a "new work!" in the early part of December last. I saw by an advertisement that your "new work" was to be published in the "Sunday Times." You do not come to me or send for me nor send me any explanations. I meet you at Dickens's on "New Year's Eve." You tell me then that you will see me in a few days and explain everything to my satisfaction. I hear nothing from you. In your various notes about the "Guy Fawkes" you do not even advert to the subject. I purposely keep myself disengaged refusing many advantageous offers of work—still I hear nothing from you. At length (*sic*) you announce a New Work as a *companion to the "Tower"*! without my name I then conclude that you do not intend to join *me* in any "New Work" and therefore determine to do something for myself—*indeed I could hold out no longer*—to show that others besides myself considered that you had left me, I was applied to by Chapman & Hall to join with them and Mr. Dickens in a speculation which indeed I promised to do should the one with Mr. Felt be abandoned. However I have still to hope that when you are disengaged from Mr. Bentley that some ar-

rangements may be made which may tend to our material benefit.

I remain, my dear Ainsworth, yours very truly,
GEO. CRUIKSHANK."

In 1841, Ainsworth published the "Guy Fawkes" mentioned in Cruikshank's letter. About this time he seems to have become involved in disagreements with Bentley. On June 22, 1841, he wrote to Ollier:

"I am scarcely surprised to learn from you that Mr. Bentley states that I promised Mr. Barham to write two separate stories for the November and December numbers of the Miscellany, because it is only one of those misstatements to which that gentleman, in all the negotiations I have had with him, has invariably had recourse. Nothing of the sort was either expressed or implied, and I cannot believe Mr. Barham made any such statement, because it is entirely foreign to the spirit of the whole arrangement. I will thank you however to give Mr. Bentley distinctly to understand that I will not write any such story or stories, and that if he does not think fit to enter into the proposed arrangement, I shall adhere to the original agreement and finish Guy Fawkes in February next. I beg you will also give him to understand that I will not allow Mr. Leech or any other artist than Mr. Cruikshank to illustrate any portion of the work; and that I insist upon a clause to that effect being inserted in the mem. of agreement."

The remark about Cruikshank is significant when read in connection with the artist's letter of three months before, and with his subsequent conduct. For although it is clear that the trouble about the publication of "St. Paul's" had been healed, through the efforts of Mr. Pettigrew, he rehashed the old grievance thirty years later.

A rupture with Bentley was imminent and it came very soon. Ainsworth left the *Miscellany* in 1841, and in February, 1842, the first number of "Ainsworth's Magazine" made its appearance. At first he was both editor and proprietor, and later he sold the magazine to his publishers—another of Cruikshank's grievances; but he afterwards bought it back, and he continued it until 1854 when he purchased *Bentley's Miscellany* and merged both magazines into one. In 1845 he had bought for £2,500 Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, of which serial he had been an editor for a short time in 1836. In a few months he discontinued the consolidated magazine and sold the *New Monthly* to his cousin, Dr. W. F. Ainsworth, closing his editorial career. For "Ainsworth's Magazine" he wrote "The Miser's Daughter", a work of considerable power, which was long years afterward dramatized by Andrew Halliday and produced at the Adelphi Theatre. In 1843 followed "Windsor Castle", an historical romance with the scene laid in the reign of Henry VIII; and in 1844 his active pen busied itself with another story of the same class, "St. James's or the Court of Queen Anne".

During the period between 1836 and 1844, Ainsworth as we have seen, was closely associated with Cruikshank, who was destined to become a thorn in his side. The second issue of "Rookwood" was illustrated by Cruikshank, who furnished also the designs for "Jack Sheppard," "The Tower of London," "Guy Fawkes," "The Miser's Daughter," "Windsor Castle" (in part), and "St. James's."

Whatever may be said of Cruikshank as an artist, he was beyond question a vain, self-centred and disagreeable person. "He had a tendency," says Blanchard

Jerrold, "to quarrel with all persons with whom he had business relations, and when he did quarrel, his words knew no bounds."* He came to that stage of boundless conceit when he regarded himself as the creator of all the works for which he supplied the illustrations and reduced the writer to the level of an ordinary amanuensis.

All the world knows his absurd pretensions to the origination of *Oliver Twist*. He also asserted his claim to everything that was good in "Jack Sheppard," "The Miser's Daughter," and "The Tower of London." But he claimed Egan's *Life in London* and even a poem of Laman Blanchard's which he had illustrated for the *Omnibus*—as well as the pattern of the hat worn by Russian soldiers! Blanchard Jerrold says in the *Life* that the controversies about Dickens and Ainsworth "arose from Cruikshank's habit of exaggeration in all things," which is a biographer's euphemism, signifying in plain English that the man was an unmitigated liar.

If any one is curious about the history of the controversies, he will find a full, fair and dispassionate account in Chapters VIII and IX of Jerrold's book. The biographer prints in full Ainsworth's dignified rejoinder to Cruikshank's assault, and justly ridicules the utterances of the eccentric designer. Austin Dobson, a competent and impartial judge, has recently added his condemnation of Cruikshank's arrogance.† "He was not exempt" says Mr. Dobson "from a certain 'Roman infirmity' of exaggerating the importance of his own performances—an infirmity which did not decrease with years. Whatever the amount of assistance he gave to

**Life of Cruikshank* (1882), i, 48-49.

†*Dictionary of National Biography, Cruikshank.*

Dickens and to Ainsworth, it is clear that it was not rated by them at the value he placed upon it. That he did make suggestions, relevant or irrelevant, can hardly be doubted, for it was part of his inventive and ever projecting habit of mind. It must also be conceded that he most signally seconded the text by his graphic interpretations; but that this aid or these suggestions were of such a nature as to transfer the credit of the 'Miser's Daughter' and 'Oliver Twist' from the authors to himself is more than can reasonably be allowed."

Mr. Frith, a friend of Cruikshank, says in his Autobiography:* "Cruikshank labored under a strange delusion regarding the works of Dickens and Ainsworth. I heard him announce to a large company assembled at dinner at Glasgow that he was the writer of 'Oliver Twist.' * * * He also wrote the 'Tower of London,' erroneously credited to Ainsworth, as well as other works commonly understood to have been written by that author. My intimacy with Cruikshank enables me to declare that I do not believe he would be guilty of the least deviation from truth, and to this day I can see no way of accounting for what was a most absurd delusion." In fact, there is only one way, if we concede truthfulness to the deluded person; he was not of sound mind.

That Cruikshank was pertinaciously suggestive may be readily admitted. "He was excessively troublesome and obtrusive in his suggestions" says Ainsworth. "Mr. Dickens declared to me that he could not stand it and should send him printed matter in future." He adds, in a kindly spirit which must appeal to every reader, considering the grossness of the unjustifiable attack upon him, "It would be unjust, however, to deny that there was not (*sic*) wonderful cleverness and quickness about

*Vol. I, 211.

Cruikshank, and I am indebted to him for many valuable hints and suggestions." Ainsworth's appreciation is further shown by an unpublished letter in my possession, written on December 23, 1838, to Mr. Jones.

"Bentley" he says "will forward you the introductory chapters and illustrations of Jack Sheppard with this note. As it is of the utmost consequence to me to produce a favourable impression upon the public by this work, I venture to hope that you will lend me a helping hand at starting. * * * Cruikshank's illustrations are, in my opinion, astonishingly fine. The scene in the loft throws into shade all his former efforts in this line."

This letter also reveals what appears abundantly in the pages of my collection,—that Ainsworth was given to calling on all his friends of journalistic and magazine associations to praise his books. He was not at all backward in urging them to puff the new works; and when Mr. Ebers was the manager of the opera, he artfully threw in suggestions of "free tickets," which was perhaps justifiable but scarcely consistent with dignity.

As an example of the way in which Cruikshank took pains to inflict upon his author the details of his designs, it may not be amiss to quote a letter which is also among my possessions, and which has not been published, to the best of my knowledge. It is addressed to Ainsworth and is dated "Saturday evening, 5 o'clock.

"Jonathan Wild has hold of Jack's left arm with *his* left hand, and grasps the collar with his right. The Jew has both his arms round Jack's right arm and Quilt Arnold has hold of the right side of Jack's coat. This fellow in making his spring at Sheppard may upsett the gravedigger who nearly falls into the grave. I should

advise the approach of the attacking party to be thus. The Jew and some other fellow go round the *north* of the church and lurk there and Qt. Arnold in that road at the N. W. corner—Wild himself to come along the *south* side so as to take Jack in the rear. Darrell is about to draw his sword. In the other subject I have given Jonathan a *stout* walking stick. I have only time to add that I am yours very truly. The cheque all safe, many thanks."

Cruikshank first put forth his claim publicly in 1872, by means of a pamphlet called *The Artist and the Author*, just after the publication of the first volume of Forster's *Dickens*. It is likely that he was encouraged in his folly by the flattery of foolish friends. Jerrold lays much blame on Thackeray, from whom he quotes a long passage exalting the artist far beyond the author. "With regard to the modern romance of 'Jack Sheppard'," remarks Thackeray, "it seems to us that Mr. Cruikshank really created the tale, and that Mr. Ainsworth, as it were, only put words to it. Let any reader of the novel think over it for awhile, now that it is some months since he had perused and laid it down—let him think, and tell us what he remembers of the tale. George Cruikshank's pictures—always George Cruikshank's pictures." But Thackeray had such a poor opinion of the book that it is strange he should have ascribed any merit to Cruikshank for having "created it". He called it "a book quite absurd and unreal, and infinitely more immoral than anything Fielding even wrote," if, as is generally supposed Thackeray was the author of the article on Fielding in the *Times* of September 2, 1840, reprinted in "Stray Papers" of Thackeray, edited by Lewis Melville and published in 1901. Thackeray wrote to his mother: "I read your views about 'Jack

Sheppard', and, such is the difference of taste, thought it poor stuff and much below the mark."* Mr. Jerrold expresses the opinion that Thackeray was always unjust to Ainsworth. "He caricatured him unmercifully in *Punch*, and never lost an opportunity of being amusing at his expense." I am not inclined to agree with Mr. Jerrold's views. The long and cordial intimacy of the two men is evidence against the truth of the theory. I find no record of any resentment on Ainsworth's part against the author of *Vanity Fair*, and Ainsworth was by no means timid in self-defense or averse to a sturdy combat with those who assailed him. Thackeray—who never got over the conviction that he himself was an "artist"—a picture maker—naturally gave to the illustrator an undue meed of praise; and at the risk of denunciation by all the scribblers who succumb to the "disease of admiration" and find it easy to glorify a famous man as if he were perfect and infallible, I venture to say that in grotesqueness and faulty drawing, the great Snob and the great Cruikshank were not very dissimilar. Yet Thackeray's comments were wisdom itself when compared with the silly utterance of Mr. Walter Thornbury, who thus delivers himself: "Even Dickens had his fine gold jewelled by Cruikshank. Ainsworth's tawdry rubbish—now all but forgotten, and soon to sink deep in the mud-pool of oblivion,—was illuminated with a false splendor by the great humorist."† A critical person might be disposed to inquire why the "great humorist" should lower himself by illuminating anything with a "false

*See introduction to Biographical Edition of Thackeray, IV. 19.

†British Artists from Hogarth to Turner, ii, 59.

splendor." It is not complimentary to the great humorist, but Mr. Thornbury unconsciously told the truth; his hero was falseness personified.

In his "Few Words about George Cruikshank," Ainsworth said: "For myself, I desire to state emphatically that not a single line—not a word—in any of my novels was written by their illustrator, Cruikshank. In no instance did he even see a proof. The subjects were arranged with him early in the month, and about the fifteenth he used to send me tracings of the plates. That was all." He adds: "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Had Cruikshank been capable of constructing a story, why did he not exercise his talent when he had no connection with Mr. Dickens or myself? But I never heard of such a tale being published." Of course, it may be said that Cruikshank did not pretend that he had written the books—only that he had furnished the leading ideas; that is an easy thing to assert, a hard thing to disprove, and an impossible thing to demonstrate.

It is fairly manifest that if there had been any real foundation for the claims of Cruikshank, he would not have waited for thirty years before setting up his title. He sought to account for the delay by asseverating that he had frequently *in private* asserted his claim, which anybody possessed of ordinary intelligence will see in a moment was a puerile make-shift; no sufficient reason or explanation. As nobody whose opinion is worth accepting has ever given credence to the tale of the old artist, it may be a waste of time to give it further attention; but it may be permitted to show that Cruikshank needed a good deal of instruction himself.

The fact is shown by the letter of Dickens, produced in facsimile by Forster,* and it is confirmed by several

*Vol. ii, 321-322.

of Ainsworth's letters now lying before me. In March, 1836, while Cruikshank was engaged on the designs for the second edition of "Rookwood," Ainsworth wrote to Macrone, the publisher, "I *have* seen some of George Cruikshank's designs, and it was because I thought them so *sketchy* that I write to you. They are anything but *full* subjects and appear to be chosen as much as possible for light work. He shirked the inauguration scene, for instance, because it was too crowded. I quite agree with you that a few good designs are better than many meagre sketches, and all I want is that you should make George understand this. He has evidently two styles—and one can scarcely recognize in some of his 'Bozzes' the hand of the designer of the Comic Almanack.

* * * *Do*, I pray of you, see George Cruikshank, and don't let him put us off so badly." Again, in writing to Macrone in 1836, he makes several recommendations for designs, and adds: "Another suggestion—and this refers to George. In addition to the figures I suggested, I wish him to introduce as entering my old gentleman's chamber, Thomas Hill, Esq. (in *propria persona*), or as I shall call him, Tom Vale. If George has not seen him, you can get the sketch from Frazer's Mag. but introduced he must be, as I mean to carry him throughout and to make him play the part of Mr. Weller in my story; I wish George therefore to give the portrait, easily done, as exact as possible." In a later letter to Cruikshank himself, while they were at work together on "The Tower," he writes: "Pray, when you are at the Tower, sketch the gateway of the Bloody Tower from the south; the chamber where the princes were murdered; the basement chamber at the right of the gateway of the Bloody Tower, near the Round Tower." All this furnishes competent testimony

that Cruikshank was a mere illustrator, directed and controlled by the author.

From the time of "Jack Sheppard" until 1881, a period of over forty years, Ainsworth was a busy man, producing book after book at regular intervals and until 1855 closely occupied with editorial labors. After "St. James's" he began "Auriol," which was by no means successful. It dealt with a London alchemist of the sixteenth century, but the plot was defective and it was not published in book form until near the close of the author's life. In 1848 he wrote "Lancashire Witches" for the *Sunday Times*, receiving £1,000. It was dedicated to his old friend James Crossley, President of the Chetham Society, which published many volumes, including Potts's *Discovery of Witches* and the *Journals* of Nicolas Assheton, both furnishing much of the material for the story. In 1854, "Star Chamber" and "The Flitch of Bacon, or the Custom of Dunmow" appeared. The "Flitch" treated of the ancient Essex custom of giving a "Gamon of Bacon" to a married pair "who had taken an oath, pursuant to the ancient 'Custom of Confession,' if ever—

"—You either married man or wife
By household brawles or contentious strife,
Or otherwise, in bed or at board,
Did offend each other in deed or word,
Or, since the Parish *clerk* said *Amen*,
You wish't yourselves unmarried agen,
Or in a twelve months time and a day,
Repented not in thought, any way;
But continued true and just in desire
As when you joyn'd hands in the holy quire."

In 1851 "the lord of the manor declined to give the flitch, but the claimants obtained one from a public

subscription, and a concourse of some three thousand people assembled in Easton Park in their honour.”* In 1855 Ainsworth himself offered to give the fitch. The candidates were Mr. James Barlow and his wife, of Chipping Ongar, and the Chevalier de Chatelain and his wife, the last named being well known in literary circles. They were old friends of Ainsworth. I have thirteen letters from Ainsworth to the Chevalier and his wife, of the most intimate character, dating from 1845 to 1880. In one of them, written at Brighton on October 22, 1854, he says:

“My dear Chevalier: Thanks for your charming little volume, full of graceful translations. You have done me the favor I find to include the ‘Custom of Dunmow’ in your collection. Within the last few days I have received another version in French of the same ballad by Jacques Desrosiers. The Tale has been translated under the title of ‘*Un An et un Jour*’, and published at Bruxelles. You will be glad to hear that a worthy personage has announced his intention of bequeathing a sum sufficient for the perpetual maintenance of the good old custom.”

On January 5, 1855, he writes to Madame de Chate-lain:

“I need scarcely say, I hope, that I shall be most happy to entertain your claim for the Fitch—and though I believe a prior claim has been made, I will gladly give a second prize rather than you should experience any disappointment.” On July 19, 1855, she received the fitch of bacon in the Windmill Field, Dunmore.

In 1856 “Spendthrift” appeared, and in 1857 “Merwyn Clitheroe” which he had begun in 1851 but had

*Dict. Nat. Biog., i, 198.

abandoned after a few weekly numbers. In 1860 he published "Ovingdean Grange, a Tale of the South Downs." The two books last mentioned were partly autobiographical.

It is unnecessary to do more than to enumerate his later productions, for although they showed the scrupulous care which he exercised in respect to details and the pains he took to be accurate in historical references, they were never as popular as his earlier works. The list is quite imposing: "Constable of the Tower," 1861; "The Lord Mayor of London," 1862; "Cardinal Pole," 1863; "John Law, the Projector," 1864; "The Spanish Match, or Charles Stuart in Madrid," 1865; "Myddleton Pomfret," 1865; "The Constable de Bourbon," 1866; "Old Court," 1867; "The South Sea Bubble," 1868; "Hilary St. Ives," 1869; "Talbot Harland," 1870; "Tower Hill," 1871; "Boscobel," 1872; "The Manchester Rebels, or the Fatal '45," 1873; "Merry England," 1874; "The Goldsmith's Wife," 1874; "Preston Fight, or the Insurrection of 1715," 1875; "Chetwynd Calverley," 1876; "The Leaguer of Lathom, a Tale of the Civil War in Lancashire," 1876; "The Fall of Somerset," 1877; "Beatrice Tyldesley," 1878; "Beau Nash," 1879; "Auriol and other tales," 1880; and "Stanley Brereton," 1881. Not a single one of this long catalogue is now remembered. Percy Fitzgerald in an article in *Belgravia* (November, 1881), said that the description of Ainsworth's books in the Catalogue of the British Museum filled no fewer than forty pages. Mr. Axon reduces the number of pages to twenty-three, but that is very extensive. In addition to the prose works whose titles are given above, he published in 1855 "Ballads, Romantic, Fantastical and Humorous," which was

illustrated by Sir John Gilbert and which contains some spirited and picturesque verses; and in 1859 "The Combat of the Thirty," a translation of a Breton lay of the middle ages, which was included in the later editions of the "Ballads."

In 1881 Ainsworth was nearly seventy-seven, and approaching the end of his career. On September 15 in that year, the Mayor of Manchester, Sir Thomas Baker, gave a banquet in his honor at the town hall. In proposing the health of the guest, the Mayor said that in the Manchester public free libraries there were two hundred and fifty volumes of his works. "During the last twelve months", said the Mayor, "those volumes have been read seven thousand six hundred and sixty times, mostly by the artisan class of readers. And this means that twenty volumes of his works are being perused in Manchester by readers of the free libraries every day all the year through."

A report of this banquet is given as an introduction to "Stanley Brereton", which was dedicated to the Mayor. I have a copy of the "official" report, a pamphlet of twenty-nine pages, whereof forty copies were printed "for private circulation only". The speeches are characteristic of English dinners, and some of them are funny without any intention on the part of the speakers. The Mayor rather astonishes us by saying that the six of the most popular works, in the order in which they were most read, were "The Tower of London", "The Lancashire Witches", "Old St. Paul's", "Windsor Castle", "The Miser's Daughter", and "The Manchester Rebels". But this was in Manchester. Ainsworth's response was modest and graceful, and he dwelt upon his delight in being styled "the Lancashire novelist". His old friend Crossley and Edmund Yates

were among the orators of the occasion, the latter responding to the toast of "The Press", and saying of "after-dinner Manchester" that "even in the midst of enjoyment he would hazard the friendly criticism that though it was eloquent it was not concise." The account ends with these significant words: "This concluded the list of toasts, and the company shortly afterwards broke up." One who reads the story of the feast is not surprised at this, for the speeches were enough to break up any company; but the tribute to Ainsworth was well-meant and sincere.

My English friend, the prospective biographer of Ainsworth, takes issue with me on my assertion that his favorite is an author who has fallen into oblivion and whose books are not read by the present generation. He refers of course to English readers, and assures me that the stories are still popular in England. "Routledge", he says, "issues a vast number of cheap editions of his works, and in addition many other publishing firms have recently issued editions of the better known novels. This has been done by Methuen, Newnes, Gibbings, Mudie, Treherne, and Grant Richards, to mention a few that I recollect at the minute." It is doubtless true that there is a demand for the tales among the less cultivated English readers, but it can not, I think, be maintained successfully that the author has a permanent and enduring literary fame. Perhaps I am influenced in my opinion by the American lack of acquaintance with Ainsworth and his works.

Contemporaneous memoirs and records are full of testimony to the personal popularity of Ainsworth in the social life of the day. He entertained freely, and was a favorite guest. Dickens and Thackeray were both fond of him, although Blanchard Jerrold, as we

have seen, doubted Thackeray's friendship. Forster says in his *Dickens*, referring to the period *circa* 1838, "A friend now especially welcome, too, was the novelist, Mr. Ainsworth, who shared with us incessantly for the three following years in the companionship which began at his house; with whom we visited, during two of these years, friends of arts and letters in his native Manchester, from among whom Dickens brought away his Brothers Cheeryble, and to whose sympathy in tastes and pursuits, accomplishments in literature, open-hearted, generous ways, and cordial hospitality, many of the pleasures of later years are due." I have a little note of his, addressed to Dickens, saying: "Don't forget your engagement to dine with me on Tuesday next. I shall send a refresher to Forster the unpunctual." There is also this letter from Dickens—strangely enough in black ink and not the blue which he employed in later days.

"Devonshire Terrace,
Fifth February, 1841.

MY DEAR AINSWORTH—

Will you tell me where that Punch is to be bought, what one is to ask for, and what the cost is. It has made me very uneasy in my mind.

Mind—I deny the beer. It is very excellent; but that it surpasses that meeker, and gentler, and brighter ale of mine (oh how bright it is!) I never will admit. My gauntlet lies upon the earth.

Yours, in defiance,
CHARLES DICKENS."

One of my Thackeray letters is addressed to Ainsworth, dated in 1844, inviting him to dine at the Garrick, with the characteristic remark, "I want to ask 3 or 4 of the littery purfession." Tom Moore in his

Journal (November 21, 1838) mentions a dinner at Bentley's where the company was "all the very *haut ton* of the literature of the day," including himself (named first), Jerdan, Ainsworth, Lever, Dickens, Campbell, and Luttrell. We read in Mackay's "Breakfasts with Rogers" of a breakfast where he met Sydney Smith, Daniel O'Connell, Sir Augustus D'Este and Ainsworth. These references might be multiplied almost indefinitely. According to Hazlitt, Ainsworth had one rule, as a host, which in these days of studied unpunctuality might be considered unduly vigorous; when he had friends to dinner he locked his outside gate at the stroke of the clock, and no late comer was admitted.

It is not to be denied that he had his foibles and that he also had his quarrels—few men of any force or strength of will and character can escape quarrels. That he fell out with Cruikshank and Bentley is not to be wondered at, for almost everybody did that, sooner or later. His passage at arms with Francis Mahony—the Father Prout of "Bells of Shandon" fame—is more to be regretted, but he was in no way to blame. He behaved very well under trying conditions. The trouble dated from Ainsworth's secession from *Bentley's Miscellany*—what Mr. Bates calls his "dis-Bentleyfication," and, ignoring their past intimacy and cordial companionship, Mahony sneered at the man "who left the tale of Crichton half told, and had taken up with 'Blue-skin,' 'Jack Sheppard,' 'Flitches of Bacon,' and 'Lancashire Witches,' and thought such things were 'literature,'"—following it up with some rather poor and clumsy verse-libels, flat, stale and unprofitable—utterly unworthy of a moment's time. Ainsworth replied most courteously in a parody of Prout, called "The Magpie of Marwood; an humble Ballade," which none could

condemn as either coarse or brutal. When Mahony came back at his former friend with quotations from private letters asking eulogistic notices and literary aid, and when he said "Has he forgotten that he was fed at the table of Lady Blessington? not merely for the sake of companionship, for a duller dog never sat at a convivial board," he showed himself a despicable cad, a perfidious creature, well deserving the name of "Jesuit scribe," which was about all the retort which Ainsworth thought fit to make.

The kindly and forgiving nature of Ainsworth is shown by a letter in my collection, written on February 24, 1880, to Charles Kent. He says: "I always regret the misunderstanding that occurred between myself and Mahony, but any offence that was given him on my part was unintentional, and I cannot help thinking he was incited to the attack he made upon me by Bentley. Be this as it may, I have long ceased to think about it, and now only dwell upon the agreeable parts of his character. He was an admirable scholar, a wit, a charming poet, and generally—not always—a very genial companion." These pleasant remarks about the man who had grossly insulted him, are quite characteristic and demonstrate the sweet reasonableness with which he treated men like Cruikshank and Father Prout.

As Blanchard Jerrold says, *Punch* was often quite severe on Ainsworth. Spielmann in his *History of Punch* confirms the statement:

"Harrison Ainsworth, as much for his good-looks and his literary vanity, as for his tendency to reprint his romances in such journals as came under his editorship, was the object of constant banter. An epigram put the case very neatly:

"Says Ainsworth to Colburn,
'A plan in my pate is,
To give my romance as
A supplement, *gratis*.'
Says Colburn to Ainsworth,
'Twill do very nicely,
For that will be charging
It's value precisely.'

"Harrison Ainsworth could not have his portrait painted, nor write a novel of crime and sensation, without being regarded as a convenient peg for pleasantry."

There seems to have been, unluckily, a shadow of a difference with William Jerdan, of the *Literary Gazette*, whose diffuse and often tedious *Autobiography* was published in 1853. "Among incipient authors," says Jerdan, "whom (to use a common phrase) it was in my power to 'take by the hand' and pull up the steep, few had heartier help than Mr. William Harrison Ainsworth, whose literary propensities were strong in youth, and who has since made so wide a noise in the world of fictitious and periodical literature. From some cause or another, which I cannot comprehend, he has given a notice to my publishers, to forbid the use of any of his correspondence in these Memoirs, though on looking over a number of his letters I can discover nothing discreditable to him, or aught of which he has reason to be ashamed." I think it is not difficult to understand what Jerdan seemed unable to comprehend. Ainsworth did not care to have his confidential requests for good notices go out to the public. It was a weakness of his to beg for complimentary reviews and Father Prout had made the most of it; small wonder that he dreaded a repetition of the experience. Jerdan gives, however, a very kindly estimate of Ainsworth.*

*Autobiography, iv, 390-393.

In Mr. Axon's memoir, he says that an engraving by W. C. Edwards of a portrait of Ainsworth by Maclise appeared on the frontispiece of Laman Blanchard's biographical sketch in the first number of "Ainsworth's Magazine". A second portrait by the same artist, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844, was the frontispiece of the fifth volume of the magazine. A portrait by Count D'Orsay dated November 21, 1844, appeared in the seventh volume. To this period belong the full-length portrait by the elder Pickersgill, the property of Chetham's Hospital, but now in the Manchester Reference Library, and a portrait by R. J. Lane. The good looks of Ainsworth have been referred to several times; they were the good looks of the days of William IV, but the Maclise and Pickersgill portraits as well as the later Fry photograph have a dandified appearance which in our modern eyes detracts from true dignity. The sketch in the *Maclise Gallery* shows him at his best, in his Fraser days, a fine and gallant figure, without the hideous whiskers of the type beloved by Tittlebat Titmouse. "This delicately drawn portrait of the novelist" comments Mr. Bates, "just at the time that he had achieved his reputation—hair curled and oiled as that of an Assyrian bull, the gothic arch coat-collar, the high neck-cloth, and the tightly strapped trousers—exhibits as fine an example as we could wish for, of the dandy of the D'Orsay type and pre-Victorian epoch."

He lived at one time at the "Elms" at Kilburn, and later at Kensal Manor House on the Harrow Road. Afterwards he lived at Brighton and at Tunbridge Wells. When he grew old he resided with his oldest daughter, Fannie, at Hurstpierpoint. He had also a residence at St. Mary's Road, Reigate, Surrey, and there

he died, on Sunday, January 3d, 1882. On January 9th, he was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, with a quiet and simple ceremonial as he wished. His widow and three daughters by his first marriage survived him.

Ainsworth had no power to portray character or to analyze motives; his genius was purely descriptive. He had a strong literary bent, and he was a man of letters in the true sense. He did not possess the spark which gives immortality, but he toiled faithfully and his work was well done even if he did not reach the standard of the greatest of his contemporaries.

Perhaps his merits were characterized rather too ornately in the *Sun* of August 2, 1852, where a reviewer said:

"His romances yield evidence, in a thousand particulars, that his temperament is exquisitely sensitive, not less of the horrible than of the beautiful. We have it in those landscapes variously coloured with the glow of Claude and the gloom of Salvator Rosa—in those lyrics grave as the songs of the Tyrol, or ghastly as the incantations of the Brocken; but still more in those creations, peopling the one and chaunting the other, namely, some of them as the models of Ostade, and others wild as the wildest dreams of Fuseli. Everywhere, however, in these romances a preference for the *grim-lie* moods of imagination renders itself apparent. The author's purpose, so to speak, gravitates towards the preternatural. Had he been a painter instead of a romancist, he could have portrayed the agonies of Ugolino, as Da Vinci portrayed the '*rotello del fico*,' in lines the most haggard and lines the most cadaverous. As a writer of fiction, his place among his contemporaries may, we conceive, be very readily indicated. He occu-

pies the same position in the present that Radcliffe occupied in a former generation."

Mr. Axon's estimate is less gorgeous but more convincing. "The essence of his power was that same faculty by which the Eastern story-teller holds spell-bound a crowd of hearers in the street of Cairo. It is this fascination which enables Ainsworth, at his best, to compel the reader's attention, and hurries him forward from the first page to the last of some tale of 'daring-do', of crime, adventure, sorrow and love. The reader who has listened to the beginning does not willingly turn aside until the story is completed and he has seen all the puppets play their part with that skilful semblance of truth that seems more real than reality itself."

It is to be hoped that the forthcoming biography will do ample justice to the memory of this charming literary personage, and may revive the fading interest in him and in his works.

GEORGE PAYNE RAINSFORD JAMES

IN a vainglorious mood I said not long ago to a well-dressed and apparently intelligent gentleman whom I met in the house of an accomplished lawyer in Washington City, that I had just had the privilege of conversing with the extremely modern novelist, Mr. Henry James. He smiled amiably and remarked airily, "Oh, the two horsemen fellow".

The remark was not without significance, because it betrayed the fact that my casual acquaintance, who might well be presumed to represent what is called "the average citizen" of this enlightened country; who was fairly well educated; who had read enough to know of the famous horsemen and of their habitual appearance in the opening chapter; who assuredly had skimmed the book-notices in our wonderful newspapers; was, after all, more distinctly impressed by the writer of sixty years ago than by the contemporaneous author whose volumes bid fair to rival in number those of his namesake—an author whose style defies definition and bewilders the simple-minded searcher after a good story.

I confess that I am puzzled by these subtle writers with their involved sentences, their clouds of verbiage, and their incomprehensible wanderings in speculative mysteries. There is a delight about the direct and there is often disappointment about the indirect. The true lover of fiction revels in the directness of Dumas and of

Dickens, but he usually accepts the intricacies of the modern school because he is told that he ought to do so or because, alone and unaided, he can discover nothing better in the product of the day.

To my Washington friend I replied, with that offensive assumption of superiority which marks the man familiar with his encyclopædia, that the writer of whom he was thinking had closed his career and finished the last chapter of his life nearly half a century ago, when Henry James was only seventeen and had not yet dreamed of Daisy Miller or forecasted the genesis of the two closely printed volumes of *The Golden Bowl*. I discerned the truth, however, that the subject was not interesting and we changed the topic of conversation.

The earlier James has not been favored by the men who compile histories of English literature. Nicoll and Seccombe merely call him "the prolific James", but devote large space to many inferior writers. Garnett and Gosse ignore him entirely. It seems to be a rule among self-constituted critics to speak of him with indifference; I think he deserves more respectful treatment. It may be that he has been a victim of that merciless propensity of men to throw stones at him who has been the subject of ridicule by those who have won popularity; when one cur barks, the whole pack joins vigorously. As Mr. Stapleton in *Jacob Faithful* profoundly observes, it is "human natur". When Macaulay damned poor Montgomery to lasting ignominy, he deliberately consigned the luckless poet to undeserved contempt; and Macaulay's essay will live while but for its caustic condemnation Montgomery would be utterly forgotten.

The "horseman" tag has for many years attached itself to G. P. R. James and has done much to bring him into ridicule. It is strange how such tags preserve

immortality, despite the fact that they are often unjust and deceiving. What is printed, remains. A New York journal said recently: "An error once made in print, it seems will never die; a mis-statement may be corrected within the hour, but it goes on its travels without the correction and becomes a bewildering part of written history". It is true also concerning a "tag". In literature, Bret Harte's parodies, the *Rejected Addresses*, and the many clever things contained in Mr. Hamilton's amusing compilation, show how easy it is to discover a mannerism and to attach to an author a label which will always identify him.

Possibly the popularity of the "horseman" remark is due in some degree to Thackeray, who began "that fatal parody," the burlesque "Barbazure, by G. P. R. Jeames Esq. etc." in this wise: "It was upon one of those balmy evenings of November which are only known in the valleys of Languedoc and among the mountains of Alsace, that two cavaliers might have been perceived by the naked eye threading one of the rocky and romantic gorges that skirt the mountain land between the Marne and the Garonne." Our own John Phoenix in his review of the "Life of Joseph Bowers the Elder"—I quote from the original edition, and not from the one printed by the Caxton Club which omits this gem—says of one of Mr. Bowers's supposititious works: "The following smacks, to us, slightly of 'Jeems.' 'It was on a lovely morning in the sweet spring time, when two horsemen might have been seen slowly descending one of the gentle acclivities that environ the picturesque valley of San Diego.' " Mr. Edmund Gosse continues the tradition when in his *Modern English Literature*, he tells us of the days when "the cavaliers of G. P. R. James were riding down innumerable roads";

while Justin McCarthy in the *History of Our Own Times* remarks pleasantly—"Many of us can remember, without being too much ashamed of the fact, that there were early days when Mr. James and his cavaliers and his chivalric adventures gave nearly as much delight as Walter Scott could have given to the youth of a preceding generation. But Walter Scott is with us still, young and old, and poor James is gone. His once famous solitary horseman has ridden away into actual solitude, and the shades of night have gathered over his heroic form". Here we perceive a variation from the familiar allusion. The "two horsemen" have condensed themselves into a single rider.

While we are speaking of the horsemen, it may not be amiss to recall what James thought of them. In 1851 he published a story called "The Fate," and in the sixteenth chapter he deals with them in a manner quite amusing but also quite pathetic. He is talking about plagiarism and he wanders into other fields. He says:

"As to repeating one's self, it is no very great crime, perhaps, for I never heard that robbing Peter to pay Paul was punishable under any law or statute, and the multitude of offenders in this sense, in all ages, and in all circumstances, if not an excuse, is a palliation, showing the frailty of human nature, and that we are as frail as others—but no more. The cause of this self-repetition, probably, is not a paucity of ideas, not an infertility of fancy, not a want of imagination or invention, but like children sent daily to draw water from a stream, we get into the habit of dropping our buckets into the same immeasurable depth of thought exactly at the same place; and though it be not exactly the same water as that which we drew up the day before it is very similar in quality and flavor, a little clearer or a little more turbid, as the case may be.

"Now this dissertation—which may be considered as

an introduction or preface to the second division of my history—has been brought about, has had its rise, origin, source, in an anxious and careful endeavor to avoid, if possible, introducing into this work the two solitary horsemen—one upon a white horse—which, by one mode or another, have found their way into probably one out of three of all the books I have written and I need hardly tell the reader that the name of these books is legion. They are, perhaps, too many; but, though I must die, some of them will live—I know it, I feel it; and I must continue to write while this spirit is in this body.

To say truth, I do not know why I should wish to get rid of my two horsemen, especially the one on the white horse. Wouwermans always had a white horse in all his pictures; and I do not see why I should not put my signature, my emblem, my monogram, in my paper and ink pictures as well as any painter of them all. I am not sure that other authors do not do the same thing—that Lytton has not always, or very nearly, a philosophizing libertine—Dickens, a very charming young girl, with dear little pockets; and Lever a bold dragoon. Nevertheless, upon my life, if I can help it, we will not have in this work the two horsemen and the white horse; albeit, in after times—when my name is placed with Homer and Shakespeare, or in any other more likely position—they may arise serious and acrimonious disputes as to the real authorship of the book, from its wanting my own peculiar and distinctive mark and characteristic.

But here, while writing about plagiarism, I have been myself a plagiarist; and it shall not remain without acknowledgment, having suffered somewhat in that sort myself. Here, my excellent friend, Leigh Hunt, soul of mild goodness, honest truth, and gentle brightness! I acknowledge that I stole from you the defensive image of Wouwerman's white horse, which you incautiously put within my reach, on one bright night of long, dreamy conversation, when our ideas of many things, wide as the poles asunder, met suddenly without clashing, or

produced but a cool, quiet spark—as the white stones which children rub together in dark corners emit a soft phosphorescent gleam, that serves but to light their little noses.”*

I hold no brief for James. I cannot assert truthfully that I am particularly well acquainted with more than four or five of his numerous books, although I remember with delight the perusal of some of them when I was a boy, reading for the story alone. But I am confident that he had his merits, and that much of the abuse showered upon him by critics has been undeserved; that he was a careful and conscientious writer whose novels are fit to be read, and that while he may no longer be ranked among “the best sellers”, he deserves a high place of honor among those who have entertained, amused and instructed their fellow men. It is only about two years ago that the Routledges of London considered it wise to begin the new career of their house by re-issuing in twenty-five volumes the historical novels, and cheaper reproductions are widely circulated. In a recent number of a New York magazine the editor says that “the fact is that James has always had a big public of his own—the public in fact that does *not* consult the ‘Dictionary of National Biography’ ”—referring to the disparaging article in the Dictionary about which I will have something to say later on. There are authors who are always praised by the critics but ignored by the

*As a matter of curiosity, I examined the twenty-one novels composing the “Revised Edition” of 1844-1849 to ascertain just how many introduced the horseman or horsemen in the first chapter. Seven disclose them; in eight they are absent; in four, the horsemen are “a party”; in two, they appear in the second chapter, the first being merely introductory.

proletariat of readers; there are authors whom the critics affect to despise but who have many readers whose judgments are not embalmed in print. James seems to belong to the last-mentioned class. Yet few are acquainted with the man himself, and I have thought that it might not be amiss to give a short account of him, referring to the estimates of his character and ability by those of his own time and also to some autograph letters of his which are in my possession and which have not been published.

The details of his life are not very well known; it was not a stirring or an eventful one. It was the life of a quiet, dignified and unostentatious man of letters, unmarked by fierce controversies and wholly devoid of domestic troubles. If his reputation has not long survived him among the critical it is because of a law of literature which Mr. Brander Matthews says is inexorable and universal. The man who has the gift of story telling and nothing else, who is devoid of humor, who does not possess the power of making character, who is a "spinner of yarns" only, has no staying power, and "however immense his immediate popularity may be, he sinks into oblivion almost as soon as he ceases to produce".* James seems to have had only in a small degree "the power of making character", and although he had a sense of humor, it manifests itself in his novels only in a mildly unobtrusive way.

George Payne Rainsford James was born in George Street, Hanover Square, London, on August 9th, 1799. His father was a physician who had seen service in the navy and was in America during the Revolution, serving in Benedict Arnold's descent on Connecticut. The son

*Brander Matthews: *Aspects of Fiction*, 153.

of the novelist, who is still living in Wisconsin, tells me that his grandfather (as he hinted) shot a man with his own hands to stop the atrocities of the siege in which Ledyard fell. The physician was also in the vessel which brought Rodney the news of De Grasse and enabled him to win the great naval victory which assisted England to make peace creditably. His paternal grandfather was Dr. Robert James, whose "powders" for curing fevers enjoyed great celebrity at one time,* but his chief title to fame is that he was admired by Samuel Johnson who said of him, "no man brings more mind to his profession."† I regret that there is a cruel insinuation by the great personage which implies that Doctor Robert was not sober for twenty years, but there is some doubt whether Johnson was really referring to James.§ Those were days of free indulgence, and much may be pardoned; at all events, no one could ever accuse the grandson of such an offence.

Young George attended the school of the Reverend William Carmalt at Putney, but he was not fortunate enough to have the advantage of a university education, which despite the sneers of those who never attended a university, is an important element in the life of any man who devotes himself to literature. It is a great corrective, and those who regard the subject from a point of view wholly utilitarian do not comprehend in the least degree what is meant by it. James soon developed a fondness for the study of languages, not only what are called "the classics," but of Persian

*They are said to have caused the death of Oliver Goldsmith, and pamphlets were published on the subject. Foster's *Oliver Goldsmith*, II. 461-463.

†Boswell (Geo. Birkbeck Hill's Edition), I. 183.

§*Id.*, III. 442.

and Arabic although he says he "sadly failed in mastering Arabic." This taste of his may account in part for his extensive vocabulary, and it may be that his diffuseness, so much criticised, was due in some degree to his ready command of an unusual number of words. In his younger days, he studied medicine, as might have been expected, but his inclination was in a different direction. He wanted to go into the navy, but says Mr. C. L. James, "his father, who had a sailor's experience and manners, said, 'you may go into the army if you like—it's the life of a dog; but the navy is the life of a d——d dog, and you shant try it.'"

He did accordingly go into the army for a short time during the "One Hundred Days," and was wounded in one of the slight actions which followed Waterloo; but he never rose beyond the rank of lieutenant. His son writes: "The British and Prussian forces were disposed all along the frontier to guard every point, and Wellington, with whom my father was acquainted, did not like the arrangement—it was Blucher's. When Napoleon crossed the Sambre at Charlevoix, the Duke saw his purpose of taking Quatre Bras, between the English and Prussians, so he sent word to all his own detachments to fall in, 'running as to a fire.' * * * My father's company was among those too late for the great battle. I have heard him tell how the cuirassiers lay piled up, men and horses, to the tops of lofty hedges. * * * My father also said that he saw a dead cuirassier behind our lines, showing there must have been a time when they actually pierced the allied centre. When he was on the field they were bringing in French prisoners, who would have been massacred by the Prussians but that English soldiers guarded them. Many years afterwards the Duke of Wellington said to my

father, in his abrupt way, 'You were at Waterloo, I think?' 'No,' he replied 'I am sorry to say.' 'Why sorry to say,' rejoined Wellington, 'if you had been there, you might not have been here.' Another of his anecdotes about the Duke is that just after Waterloo, where it is well known that a great part of the allied army was wholly routed, some officers were talking about who 'ran', when Wellington, who had been quietly listening to these unhopeful personalities, cut in thus: "'Run! who wouldn't have run under a fire like that? I am sure I should—if I had known any place to run to.'"

One incident in his army life is of interest. Some thirty years ago Mr. Maunsell B. Field, a gentleman whose title to fame is somewhat dubious, published a book called "Memories of Many Men." He knew James well, and collaborated with him in one of his books—"Adrian, or the Clouds of the Mind." Mr. Field says, after mentioning an alleged fact which is not a fact, viz: that James was taken prisoner before the battle of Waterloo and detained until after the battle, "The incident which occurred during his confinement there cast a gloom upon the rest of his life. For some cause which he never explained to me, he became engaged in a duel with a French officer. He escaped unhurt himself, but wounded his adversary who died, after lingering for months. I have still in my possession the old-fashioned pistols with which this duel was fought, which my deceased friend presented to me at the time of our early acquaintance."* Field's story is made up in a ridiculously inaccurate way. James was

*Memories: by M. B. Field p. 188—Harper's, 1874.

not captured before Waterloo, or after it, for that matter. During his later travels he became involved in a difficulty with a French officer and found himself compelled, according to the absurd practice of the time, to fight a duel with him. The Frenchman was not killed, but only wounded in the arm, and the duel was fought with swords, not with pistols! The truth is, that after the sword-duel, James was challenged to fight again with pistols. Mr. C. L. James writes me thus: "It made him (G. P. R. James) very angry; and, being a good shot then, he felt confident of the result if he should accept but said he would put the point of honor to the French officer's regiment. They replied by inviting him to dine at the mess. On receiving this message, he took up his pistols which were ready, loaded, saying 'then we shall have no use for these,' and at that moment one of them went off, sending the bullet through the floor close to his foot, though he felt sure they were not cocked." Mr. Field undoubtedly meant to tell the truth, but his reminiscences cannot be relied upon in regard to James or to any one else.

As a lad of seventeen he wrote a number of sketches, afterwards published under the title of "A String of Pearls," which were rather free translations from the oriental tales he had studied so fondly.* He travelled extensively for those times, visiting France and Spain soon after the abdication of Napoleon. These early travels and adventures supplied him with the idea of *Morley Ernstein*. He became acquainted with Cuvier and other men of eminence, and it is gratifying to

*Allibone gives the date of publication as 1849; but it must have been published in some form prior to May 17, 1833. See *post*, page 184.

Americans to know that Washington Irving liked him and gave him encouragement. It has been said that his first work was the *Life of Edward the Black Prince*, said to have been produced in 1822, but one of my letters, written in 1835, indicates that it was not produced earlier than 1836. The son thinks it must have been written before 1830. He had a disposition to enter political life, but he abandoned the idea in 1827. He was a mild Tory. His ambition was in the direction of a diplomatic career. His father had some influence with Lord Liverpool, who offered him the post of Secretary to an Embassy to China,—a temporary appointment only, and one which promised him no preferment. It was declined, and a week later Lord Liverpool died suddenly.

In 1828 he married the daughter of Honoratus Leigh Thomas, an eminent physician of that day. She survived her husband exactly thirty-one years, dying at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on June 9th, 1891. The assertion made in some accounts of him that James married in the United States is wholly untrue. After the marriage, they lived in France, Italy and Scotland.

In 1825 he wrote his first novel, *Richelieu*, which was not published until 1829. Regarded by many as the best of his novels, it is an excellent example of his strength and of his weakness. It deals with elementary emotions, and makes but slight attempts to portray character except in the simplest and most obvious way. Although it bears the name of the great Cardinal, it might as well have been called "Louis XIII", or "Chavigni," or "The Count de Blenau", for Richelieu himself appears but seldom on the scene and is not the hero or the central figure. The narrative runs briskly on, plentifully seasoned with deeds of daring and hair-

breadth escapes, culminating in the familiar climax of the almost miraculous arrival of a pardon when the hero has bared his neck to receive the axe of the executioner. It is evident from the outset that the nobleman whose fortunes are the subject of the story and the conventional lady of his love will marry and "be happy ever after." The abundant historical and antiquarian padding is admirably devised and executed, well placed and never tiresome. The tale is skilfully constructed and if it teaches any lesson, it is that of courage, truth, honor and loyalty. Our modern "historical novels" are in many respects distinctly inferior to *Richelieu*. Singularly enough, he did not include it in the revised edition of his Works.

After reading *Richelieu*, Sir Walter Scott advised him to adopt literature as a profession, and as he imitated Scott, the value of the advice is not to be underestimated. As Mr. Field's story goes, James had kept the manuscript concealed from his father, but he managed to get an introduction to Scott, who promised to give him his opinion. After six months no news had come from Scotland. James was riding one day in Bond Street, when, his horse shying, his carriage was pressed against another. The occupant of the other carriage was Scott, and he invited James to call upon him. To his surprise and delight, Scott praised the book highly, and wrote his opinion, which enabled the lucky author to find a publisher, to whom he sold the copyright for a song. In his General Preface to the Works (1844-1849) James himself gives a very different account of the matter. He says that a friend showed Sir Walter one volume of a romance written long before, and he himself sent a letter to Scott asking advice in regard to persevering in a literary career. Some months passed,

and James "felt somewhat mortified and a good deal grieved" at receiving no response, but one day, on returning from the country to London, he found a packet on his table containing the volume and a note. "The opinion expressed in that note" adds James "was more favourable than I had ever expected, and certainly more favourable than I deserved; for Sir Walter was one of the most lenient of critics, especially to the young. However, it told me to persevere, and I did so."* Irving and Scott united in encouraging him to produce his next novel, *Darnley*, with another great Cardinal as a principal character. *Darnley* was sketched and drafted at Montreuil-sur-Mer in December, 1828, and was completed in a few months. It is still popular with readers of fiction and has much of the charm which pervades its predecessor. James lived for a time at Evreux, and *De l'Orme*, written there in 1829, appeared in 1830. *Philip Augustus* was produced in less than seven weeks, and was published in 1831. Under William IV he was appointed Historiographer Royal, and published several pamphlets officially.† In 1842 he lived at Walmer, and was frequently a guest of the Duke of Wellington at Walmer Castle—a fact jocosely mentioned in the *Life of Charles Lever*, where it is recorded that Lever said to McGlashan that he must beware of James, who had become dangerous from irritation, but suggested that as James had been dining twice a week with the Duke, "he had eaten himself into a more than ordinary bilious temper."§ In 1845 he went to Germany, partly for recreation and partly to obtain information to be

*Works Vol. I. "The Gipsy," vii.

†Dictionary of National Biography, xxix, 209-210.

§Fitzpatrick's *Life of Lever*, II—21.

used in the *History of Richard Coeur de Lion*, upon which he was then engaged. The illness of his children detained him for a year; and at Karlsruhe and Baden-Baden he wrote *Heidelberg* and the *Castle of Ehrenstein*. On his return to England he lived for some time near Farnham, Surrey, where he wrote voluminously. He was accustomed to rise at five in the morning, to write with his own hand until nine, and later in the day to dictate to an amanuensis, walking to and fro meanwhile.

Towards 1850 he decided to leave England and go to America. His original intention was to settle in Canada. He had met with severe pecuniary reverses. The collected edition of his works was illustrated with steel engravings, but after a few volumes had appeared the publisher failed. The engraver sued James as a partner in the enterprise, and poor James had to pay several thousand pounds. In this plight he sought his friend, the Duke of Northumberland, who endeavored to dissuade him from leaving England and offered him a signed check, with the amount left blank, asking him to accept it and fill the blank himself. To his credit, James declined the generous gift.*

When he reached New York in July, 1850, he took lodgings in the old New York Hotel. He had many letters of introduction, including one to Horace Greeley, who, he said, had "the head of a Socrates and the face of a baby." Hotel life proving unsatisfactory, he rented Charles Astor Bristed's house at Hell Gate, opposite Astoria. Of his many troubles in getting into his new home, he wrote an amusing account in verse

*This is all according to Field, and may be taken for what it is worth.

which Mr. Field prints.* Field tells a story of a wealthy man of New York who was introduced to James, and remarked that he was a great admirer of the works, that he believed he had read all that were published, and that there was one "which he vastly preferred to all the others." "And which is that?" asked James. "The Last Days of Pompeii," was the answer. "That is Bulwer's, not mine," replied the mortified novelist. He also tells of a lady who found in a village library what she supposed to be a copy of an English edition of one of James's novels in two volumes. She read them with much enjoyment, and did not discover until she had finished them, that she had been reading the first volume of one and the second volume of another. With admirable tact and discretion Field told this to James, and says "he winced under it."

In 1851 he hired a furnished house at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and later he bought property there, making some laudable efforts at farming. Mr. Field says:

"In the meantime he was also industriously pegging away at book-making, although to the casual observer he appeared to be the least occupied man in the place. He never did any literary work after eleven o'clock A. M. until evening. He was not accustomed to put his own hand to paper, when composing, but always employed an amanuensis. At this time he had in his service in that capacity the brother of an Irish baronet, who spoke and wrote English, French, German and Italian, and whom I had procured for him at the modest stipend of five dollars a week. When James was dictating, he always kept a paper of snuff upon the table on which his secretary wrote, and he would stride up

*Memoirs, 191-195.

and down the room, stopping every few minutes for a fresh supply of the titillating powder. He never looked at the manuscript, or made any corrections except upon proof-sheets."

During that summer James and Field produced *Adrian*, finishing it in five weeks. Notwithstanding Field's assertion that "it was very kindly received by the critics," it does not appear to have enjoyed any marked success.

In 1852 he was appointed British Consul at Norfolk, Virginia. He was not contented there, as we may see from his letters; but he received many kindnesses, and on the last night he spent in the United States he spoke to Field of the Virginians, as "a warm hearted people." His health suffered and his spirits also; the yellow fever raged in the city and caused him great trouble and anxiety. While in the United States he wrote *Ticonderoga*, *The Old Dominion*, and other novels; his fertile pen was always busy. His latest work was *The Cavalier*, published in 1859. In 1856 the Consulate was removed to Richmond. At his earnest request he was transferred from Virginia in September, 1858, and was appointed Consul General at Venice, where it was hoped that his health would improve. The war between France and Austria soon broke out, his labors and anxieties were increased and in April, 1860, his illness became serious. On June 9, 1860, he died of an apoplectic stroke, "an utter break up of mind preceding the end" as Lever wrote. He was buried in Venice—some accounts say in the Lido cemetery, but the monument, erected by the English residents in Venice, is in the Protestant portion of the cemetery of St. Michele, which is on an island not far from the Lido. Laurence Hutton, in his *Literary Landmarks of Venice*, refers to

a vague tradition among the older alien residents that he was buried in the Lido, where, Hutton says, there are a few very ancient stones and monuments marking the graves of foreign visitors to Venice, none of them seeming to be of a later date than the middle of the eighteenth century. But Sir Francis Vincent, the last British Ambassador to the Venetian Republic, is buried there. Mr. Hutton adds that the stone in St. Michele is "a tablet blackened by time, broken and hardly decipherable"; but when I saw it in the summer of 1906 it was only slightly discolored, and not broken at all. It showed no evidence of restoration, and was blackened only as much as might be expected of a stone forty-five years old in a climate like that of Venice. The epitaph, written by Walter Savage Landor, is absolutely distinct and easily read.

"George Payne Rainford James.

British Consul General in the Adriatic.

Died in Venice, on the 9th day of June, 1860.

His merits as a writer are known wherever the English language is, and as a man they rest on the hearts of many.

A few friends have erected this humble and perishable monument."

Hutton attempts to give the epitaph in full but makes an unaccountable error in substituting "heads" for "hearts." It is another illustration of the ill will of the fates that even on his tombstone his name should be inscribed incorrectly. "*Rainford*" is doubtless the mistake of the Italian who prepared the monument.*

*It is said, but on rather dubious authority, that he was sometimes called "George Prince Regent James," and that many believed it to be his real name.

Mr. J. A. Hamilton, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says: "An epitaph, in terms of somewhat extravagant eulogy, was written by Walter Savage Landor." The epitaph, which I copied word for word, scarcely deserves Mr. Hamilton's censure. Surely there is nothing extravagant about it. I regret that in such a valuable work as the *Dictionary*, the account of James is so slight, perfunctory, and in many respects inaccurate. It could have been made much better, and it is in marked contrast with most of the biographical sketches included in that admirable compendium.

Mr. Hamilton sums up in a careless and indifferent way the literary career of James. "Flimsy and melodramatic as James's romances are, they were highly popular. The historical setting is for the most part laboriously accurate, and though the characters are without life, the moral tone is irreproachable; there is a pleasant spice of adventure about the plots, and the style is clear and correct. The writer's grandiloquence and artificiality are cleverly parodied by Thackeray in 'Barbazure, by G. P. R. Jeames, Esq., &c.,' in 'Novels by Eminent Hands,' and the conventional sameness of the opening of his novels, 'so admirable for terseness,' is effectively burlesqued in 'The Book of Snobs,' chap. ii. and xvi." It is the old story: Thackeray made fun of him, and so—away with him! Yet there was a time when everybody read James and few read Thackeray. I venture to assert that the romances are neither flimsy nor melodramatic, unless Scott's romances are flimsy and melodramatic. I find no grandiloquence in them.

Probably the best and most authoritative sketch of his life is contained in the preface which he wrote for the collected edition of his novels, published, in twenty-one volumes, in 1844-1849. Of course this includes no

account of the last ten years of his career. The number of volumes he gave to the world was enormous, as may be seen from the list of his works compiled from the *Dictionary* and from Allibone's laboriously minute record.* They tell of his untiring industry; evidently he loved to write for the sake of writing. His books brought him a goodly income, but although he seems to have had a small fortune at one time, he was generally poor; careless about his expenditure; ever ready and willing to give aid to those who needed it, particularly to his literary brethren; a noble, honest Christian gentleman, devoid of selfishness; a good husband and father, simple and direct in his ways, charitable, open-hearted, deserving of the esteem and affection of all who knew him. It was said of him by a writer who deplored "the fatal facility" of the novels, that "there is a soul of true goodness in them—no maudlin affectation of virtue, but a manly rectitude of aim which they derive directly from the heart of the writer. His enthusiastic nature is visibly impressed upon his productions. They are full of his own frank and generous impulses—impulses so honorable to him in private life. Out of his books, there is no man more sincerely beloved. Had he not even been a distinguished author, his active sympathy in the cause of letters would have secured to him the attachment and respect of his contemporaries."

His activity was by no means limited to the field of prose fiction. In poetry, he produced *The Ruined City* in 1828; *Blanche of Navarre*, a five act play, in 1839, and *Camaralzaman*, a "fairy drama" in three acts, in 1848. My "first edition" of *Blanche of Navarre*, a pamphlet of ninety-eight pages, with a dedication to

*See Appendix.

Talfourd,—until it came into my hands. After an existence of sixty-six years, unvexed by the paper-knife, and in that “unopened” condition so dear to the heart of a collector—does not disclose any good reason for its creation. The finale of Act III is an example of its “lofty poetic tone”—

“DON JOHN (*pointing to the gallery*).
We have spectators there! A lady points!
Let us go succour her!
DON FERDINAND (*stopping him*).
Nay, I beseech!
Most likely 'tis my sister!—Foolish child!
She has maids there enow,—Lo, they are gone!
We'll close the night with wine.
[*The drop scene descends to dumb-show*].”

So we might suppose. The hospitable suggestion of Don Ferdinand has a flavor of reckless rioting about it which brings to mind the one time favorite amusement of a Tammany Hall leader—“opening wine.”

It is only fair to let him tell his own story about his literary fecundity. He says:

“Before I close my present task, I may be permitted to say a few words in regard to the observations which are uniformly made upon every author who writes rapidly and often. I will not repeat the frequently noticed fact, that the best writers have generally been the most voluminous; for I must contend that neither the number of an author's works, nor the rapidity with which they are produced, affords any criterion whatsoever by which to judge of their merit. They may be numerous and excellent, like those of Voltaire, Scott, Dryden, Vega, Boccaccio and others; they may be rapidly written, and yet accurate, like the great work of Fénelon, and they may be quite the reverse. * * * I may mention, in my own case, a few circumstances which may ac-

count for the number and rapidity of my works. In the first place, all the materials for the tales I have written, and for many more than I ever shall write, were collected long before this idea of entering upon a literary career ever crossed my mind. In the next place, I am an early riser, and any one who has that habit must know that it is a grand secret for getting through twice as much as lazier men can perform. Again, I write and read during some portion of every day, except when I am travelling, and even then if possible. I need not point out, that regular application in literary, as well as all other kinds of labour, will effect results which no desultory efforts, however energetic, can obtain. Then, again, the habit of dictating instead of writing with my own hand, which I first attempted at the suggestion of Sir Walter Scott, relieves me of the manual labour which many authors have to undergo, leaves the mind clear and free to act, and affords facilities inconceivable to those who have not tried, or, having tried, have not been able to attain it.”*

I am not convinced that the custom of dictating is one which should be observed by an author who aims at the highest excellence.

In the accounts of his life and his work there are many discrepancies and contradictions. For example Mr. Allibone—who is not altogether trustworthy in details—tells us that his first book was *A Life of Edward the Black Prince*, published in 1822; but the *Dictionary of National Biography* ascribes that publication to the year 1836, and the *Dictionary* is undoubtedly right, for he said in 1835 “*The Black Prince* comes on but slowly.”† The *Dictionary* says that as “historiographer royal”—a sonorous title which must have afforded great pleasure to its bearer—he published in

*Works, Vol. I. xiv.

†Letter to Cunningham, *post*, page—.

1839 a *History of the United States Boundary Question*, but Mr. Allibone insists that it was not his production. I have an autograph letter of James which, I think, warrants the belief that Allibone is wrong. The letter is a good example of his serious epistolary style.

“FAIR OAK LODGE, PETERSFIELD
HANTS, 4th November, 1837.

MY LORD:—

A few months previous to the death of his late Majesty, he was pleased to appoint me Historiographer in ordinary for England into which office I was duly sworn. On the accession of Her Majesty our present Queen, although I was informed that the office did not necessarily lapse on the death of the monarch who conferred it, I applied to Her Majesty through her Lord Chamberlain for her gracious confirmation of the honor her Royal Uncle had conferred upon me. Many months have now elapsed even since Lord Conyngham did me the honor of writing to inform me that the time had not then arrived for Her Majesty to take into consideration that class of offices and I am induced in consequence to apply directly to your Lordship as I understand that your department of the government embraces such matters. I should have waited longer ere I thus intruded upon your valuable time but that I am about to publish a new Historical work of some importance in the title to which must appear whether I am or am not still Historiographer. If I am to understand by the silence which has been maintained upon the subject that it is Her Majesty's determination to deprive me of the office which her royal uncle conferred I must bow to her gracious pleasure and neither my station in society, my fortune, or my views of what is right require or permit me to say one word to alter such a resolution. Should that determination however not have been formed allow me to submit to your Lordship that to dismiss me from a post to which I was so lately appointed is to cast a stigma of which I am not deserving. If I have ever

written anything that is calculated to injure society; if I have ever debased my pen to pander to bad appetites of any kind; if I have ever failed to dedicate its efforts to the promotion of truth, virtue, and honor, not only let the dismissal be made public but the cause of that stigma be assigned. But if on the contrary to have done my best, and that perhaps with more reputation than my writings merit, to promote all that is good and noble; if to have bestowed vast labour, anxious research, valuable time, and many hundreds of pounds for which I can hope no return on such works as the History of Charlemagne, the History of Edward the Black Prince, the History of Chivalry, and my letters to Lord Brougham on the system of Education in the higher German States—if these circumstances afford any claim to honor or distinction, I think in my case they may stand in the way of an act which I cannot yet make up my mind to believe that Her Majesty's present ministers would advise. I have given up the expectation indeed that a fair share of honors and distinctions—or in fact any share at all—should be bestowed upon literary men in this country, even when a high education, upright conduct, and a fortune not ill employed combine with literary reputation; but I still trust that that which has been given will not be taken away.

I have now to apologize, my Lord—and I feel that an apology is very necessary—for addressing this letter to your private house; but your kindness and courtesy when, as a result of some communications between my friend Sir David Brewster and myself, I addressed you on the state of literature in England have encouraged me to trespass upon you in some manner.

I have the honor to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient servant

G. P. R. JAMES."

I have not been able to discover what effect this letter had, but it is evident that the 'Historical work' was the pamphlet on the Boundary Question as I do not

find a record of any other "historiographical" work to which the language of the letter is applicable.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* credits James with *Memoirs of Celebrated Women* (three volumes, 1837), but Allibone says that he had no share in it, further than writing a preface or "something of that kind." The *Dictionary* further informs us that "about 1850 he was appointed British Consul for Massachusetts"—an impossible office—and that he was transferred to Norfolk, Virginia, in 1852, becoming Consul General at Venice in 1856. Allibone makes him Consul at Richmond, Virginia, in 1852 and Consul General at Venice in September, 1858. His friend Hall places him at Norfolk in 1852 and in Venice in 1859. *Appleton's Cyclopaedia* follows Allibone as to dates, but very properly ignores Richmond in favor of Norfolk. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that Irving encouraged him to produce the *Life of the Black Prince* in 1822 (an evident error), sends him as "Consul to Richmond" in 1852 and transfers him to Venice in September, 1858. The truth is that he went to Norfolk in 1852, to Richmond in 1856, and to Venice in 1858. As we have seen, even the place of his interment is not without uncertainty. These variances in regard to the facts of his life are due to the comparative neglect which has befallen his memory. Perhaps they are not of much importance. Although he had numerous friends and acquaintances, none of them, except Mr. S. C. Hall and Maunsell B. Field, left anything approaching an account of his life, and even Mr. Hall's reminiscences are meagre and cursory, while Mr. Field's are largely apocryphal.

He surely possessed the art of making friends. Before his marriage he knew not only Scott and Irving,

but Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Walter Savage Landor, his friendship with Hunt and Landor continuing to the end of his life. Probably he never saw Shelley, but he admired greatly the writings of that radical enthusiast. He knew Thackeray, but did not like him; perhaps the parody galled him. He detested the brilliant, showy, shallow Count D'Orsay. His son says that he never heard his father speak of Dickens as if they had met.* "He fully acknowledged the power and versatility of Dickens's works, but there was something in them which did not please him. He had detected, if it is there—suspected, if it is not—the essential vulgarity which this master of pathos and humor is said to have shown those who came in personal contact with him." He had some acquaintance with Bulwer Lytton. "It is odd" remarks the younger James "but his tone towards this eminent author, who at some points (*Richelieu* and the historic novels) approached near enough his own line for rivalry, was rather one of compassion. He knew the personal and domestic sorrows of one whom unfriendly critics accused of soulless dandyism; and he seemed to have a sort of friendly feeling for that partially unsuccessful ambition which made the author of books as unlike as *Pelham* and *Pausonias* attempt so many things without reaching the highest rank in any." The Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Wellington, Charles Lever, Thomas Campbell, and Allan Cunningham, were also friends. In America, he was known and well received by President Pierce, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Charles Sumner, Farragut, Barron, Henry A. Wise, Roger A. Pryor, John Tyler, Winder, General Scott, Edward Everett, Marcy, Caleb Cushing and a host of

*Letter of C. L. James.

others. His gentle, modest nature, his cultivated taste, and his frank, pleasant ways seem to have attracted all who came within the circle of his friendship. He had much conversation with Marcy. Each had some idea of sounding the other diplomatically; both took snuff and neither proposed to be sounded. When James asked Marcy something which the latter did not choose to answer, Marcy would ask him for a pinch of snuff, and he readily perceived that this evasion was as good for two as for one.

The late Donald G. Mitchell speaks of him as "an excellent, industrious man, who drove his trade of novel-making—as our engineers drive wells—with steam, and pistons, and borings, and everlasting clatter", adding that "what he might have done, with a modern typewriter at command, it is painful to imagine. But he gives us the best account I have seen of the personal appearance of James.

"I caught sight of this great necromancer of 'miniver furs,' and mantua-making chivalry—in youngish days, in the city of New York—where he was making a little over-ocean escape from the multitudinous work that flowed from him at home; a well-preserved man, of scarce fifty years, stout, erect, gray-haired, and with countenance blooming with mild uses of mild English ale—kindly, unctuous—showing no signs of deep thoughtfulness or of harassing toil. I looked him over, in boyish way, for traces of the court splendor I had gazed upon, under his ministrations, but saw none; nor anything of the 'manly beauty of features, rendered scarcely less by a deep scar upon the forehead', nor 'of the gray cloth doublets slashed with purple;' a stanch honest, amiable, well-dressed Englishman—that was all."*

*English Lands, Letters and Kings, 284.

Mr. Mitchell surely did not expect to see Mr. James attired in armor, with a scarred face, because he wrote of armed knights, and his remarks certainly appear to be boyish in the extreme. But he atones for them by saying:

“And yet, what delights he had conjured for us! Shall we be ashamed to name them, or to confess it all? Shall the modern show of new flowerets of fiction, and of lilies—forced to the front in January—make us forget utterly the old cinnamon roses, and the homely but fragrant pinks, which once regaled and delighted us, in the April and May of our age?”

Mr. Field says of him: “If he was sometimes a tedious writer, he was always the best story-teller that I ever listened to. He had known almost everybody in his own country, and he never forgot anything. The literary anecdotes alone which I have heard him relate would suffice to fill an ordinary volume. He was a big hearted man, too—tender, merciful, and full of religious sentiment; a good husband, a devoted father, and a fast friend.” Such is the testimony of all his acquaintances who have left any record of their impressions.

It is not my purpose to present any critical study of James or of his works, but only to submit a few of his unpublished letters, in which his easy grace of style and his frank and simple nature are manifest; to give some of the contemporary estimates of him; and to recall to the minds of readers of our own day a literary personality which should not be entirely forgotten.

Among the good friends of James of whom I have spoken was that other novelist, almost as prolific in production, but better remembered by modern readers—Charles Lever. When the author of *Charles O'Malley* was the editor of the Dublin University Magazine, he

wrote to a certain Reverend Edward Johnson, now wholly lost to fame, requesting him to contribute to the magazine and inviting him to visit the editor; but by mistake he addressed the letter to James. "Though he liked the man" says Mr. Fitzpatrick, "he rather pooh-poohed the stereotyped 'two cavaliers' of G. P. R. James, who of a fine autumnal day might be seen, etc."* Lever was too kind-hearted to explain the error, and James not only contributed to the magazine but visited Lever at Templeogue. The story "*De Lunatico Inquirendo*" was supposed to have been written by Lever, who wrote only the preface. "*Arrah Neil*" was published in the Magazine, a work which has peculiar merit and one character, Captain Barecolt, who is among James's best people. It is said that James abused McGlashan for having "emasculated his jokes". "Where be they? as we used to say in the Catechism" was Lever's comment. One Major Dwyer, referred to in Fitzpatrick's *Life of Lever*, says: "Lever would sometimes say that he wanted powder for his magazine. 'It is doubtful whether James's contributions' he said, 'were James's powders at all, or merely that inferior substitute which the Pharmacopœia condemns.'" Chamber's Cyclopædia stated, twenty years before the death of James, that he was in the habit of dictating to minor scribes his thick-coming fancies. Mr. R. H. Horne would have it that he always dictated his novels, but that was a very exaggerated statement. He dictated only at intervals. Major Dwyer tells of a novel composed by James at Baden, that "it was penned by an English artist who resided at Lichtenthal, and also spoke the purest South Devonian, and moreover wrote Eng-

*Life of Lever, II. 21.

lish nearly as he pronounced it. James's flowery language thus rendered, was highly amusing; I had an opportunity of reading some pages of copy."

In spite of his disparaging remarks, Lever was attached to the man himself, and we find the two romance-writers together in 1845, at Karlsruhe—where, as Mr. Downey says in his *Life of Lever*, "G. P. R. James and himself were the cynosure of all eyes"—and later at Baden. Lever dedicated to James his novel *Roland Cashel*, in 1849—"a Roland for your Oliver, or rather for your Stepmother," said Lever, for James had dedicated to him the novel with that title in 1846. Soon afterwards, however, they became separated, as James went to the United States where he remained about eight years. One incident connected with the *Dublin* is worthy of remembrance. In Volume XXVII of the Magazine (1846) appeared some verses beginning "A cloud is on the western sky." They were said to be "Lines by G. P. R. James" and were "prefaced by a note: 'My dear L——, I send you the song you wished to have. The Americans totally forgot, when they so insolently calculated upon aid from Ireland in a war with England, that their own apple is rotten at the core. A nation with five or six million slaves who would go to war with an equally strong nation with no slaves is a mad people. Yours, G. P. R. James.' 'The Cloud,' (amongst other things not intended to be pleasant to Americans) called upon the dusky millions to 'shout,' and the author of the 'Lines' declared that Britain was ready to 'draw the sword in the sacred cause of liberty.'" It was Lever's joke. Poor James had never heard of the poem until years later, in 1853, an attempt was made to drive him out of Norfolk, Virginia, because of it. "God forgive me" said Lever, "it was my doing." Lever declared that he had no more notion of James's 'powder'

exciting a national animosity than that Holloway's Ointment could absorb a Swiss glacier.* The son says that during the first winter they spent in Norfolk there were no less than eight fires in the house, or in other parts of the block, which James attributed to deliberate attempts to burn him out on account of his supposed abolitionist views.

Lever was Consul at Spezzia when James was in Venice, and they renewed their old intimacy. The younger James says that Lever was a very eccentric genius—a thorough specimen of the wild Irishman. Among his traits was chronic impecuniosity. Another was that he and all his family delighted in out-door life and could do everything athletic. "When he was at Venice he told us he was threatened with a visit from a British war vessel, which it would be his duty to receive in state, and (of course) he had no boat or other means of doing so with proper pomp. 'But,' he said, 'we can take the British flag in our mouth and swim out to meet her, singing Rule Britannia.' "

Notwithstanding the manifestations of hostility by the good people of Norfolk, it may be remembered that when James was transferred to Venice, the Virginian poet, John R. Thompson, addressed to him some farewell verses, published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, beginning:

Good bye! they say the time is up—
The "solitary horseman" leaves us,
We'd like to take a "stirrup cup",
Though much indeed the parting grieves us:
We'd like to hear the glasses clink
Around a board where none was tipsy,
And with a hearty greeting drink
This toast—The Author of the Gipsy!

*Fitzpatrick's Life of Lever II. 418.

The same Major Dwyer relates at some length the conversations of the guests at Lever's home in Ireland. Speaking of a visit of Thackeray about 1842, he says: "James had been living at Brussels previously, and an intimacy had sprung up between Lever and him. Thackeray's star was then barely peeping over the eastern horizon; Lever's had attained an altitude that rendered it clearly visible to the uncharmed eye, whilst James's had already passed its point of culmination, and was in its descending node." I do not know what the eloquent Major meant by an "uncharmed eye," but his figures of speech are quite luxuriant. He does not think that Thackeray and James met at Lever's house, but he tells of a dinner there, where a Captain Siborne, Doctor Anster, and the Major were asked to meet James. It appears that after dinner, James took a very decided lead in the conversation on horsemanship and military tactics. "James" remarks the Major, "was not horsey looking; one would at first sight be inclined to set him down as an exception to the general rule, that 'all Britons are born riders'; he looked more like a sea-man than a soldier." This is deliciously fatuous—as if a man could not talk well about horses unless he had a horsey look or drive fat oxen unless he himself were fat. It is like the Mitchell prattle about his having no scar and wearing no doublet. In talking about horses and riders, James evidently did not foresee that in the future his name would be so closely associated with "one horseman" or even two, threading romantic gorges. Perhaps it would have been better for his fame, if he had eschewed horsemen. "Why," continues the Major, "he should have selected two such topics puzzled both Siborne and myself, but I subsequently found that James liked to seize upon and talk

categorically about things which other individuals of the company present might be suspected of considering their own peculiar hobbies." This device for enlivening post-prandial dullness by stirring up solemn and conceited prigs is quite familiar, but it does not seem to have occurred to the Major that the clever novelist was making game of the two military magnates. He tells us further how Siborne declined "to discuss professional matters with a civilian," and closes his pompous and heavy remarks with this gem of concentrated wisdom: "James, so fond of horseflesh, finished his career as Consul General at Venice *where the sight of a horse is never seen.*" I suppose that the Major would have considered it more fitting if James had selected some place to die in where 'the sight of a horse could be seen' at all times by merely looking out of the window. It is not difficult to imagine the joy with which the nimble-minded James put through their paces the heavy-witted and cumbrous Captain and Major at the pleasant dinner-table of Charles Lever. It reminds me of an occasion when a sincere and simple-minded Briton undertook to engage in single combat with Mark Twain over a statement thrown out by the equally sincere and simple-minded Clemens that the people of the Phillipine Islands had a perfect right to make arson and murder lawful if they considered it proper to incorporate in their constitution a provision to that effect. His powerful arguments did not produce the slightest change in the convictions of Mr. Clemens.

However severely the sapient compilers of *Chambers' Cyclopaedia* or the critics of our own generation may sneer at the novels—the fiction of the twentieth century being in the estimation of our contemporaries so vastly superior to all that has gone before—it is

something to have had the approval of Christopher North, who was not given to bestowing lavish commendation upon the work of mere Englishmen. If you will take from the shelves the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, you will find these words:

"*North*: Mr. Colburn has lately given us two books of a very different character, [from that of some previously mentioned], *Richelieu* and *Darnley*—by Mr. James. *Richelieu* is one of the most spirited, amusing and interesting romances I ever read; characters well drawn—incidents well managed—story perpetually progressive—catastrophe at once natural and unexpected—moral good, but not goody—and the whole felt, in every chapter, to be the work of a—gentleman.

Shepherd: And what o' *Darnley*?

North: Read and judge."*

Edgar Allan Poe, who thought himself a critic while he was an original genius absolutely unfitted for just or accurate criticism, said that James was lauded from mere motives of duty, not of inclination—duty erroneously conceived. "His sentiments are found to be pure," wrote Poe, "his morals unquestionable and pointedly shown forth—his language indisputably correct." But he calls him an indifferent imitator of Scott, accuses him of having little pretension to genius, and adds that we "seldom stumble across a novel emotion in the solemn tranquillity of his pages."† Elsewhere Poe says: "James's multitudinous novels seem to be written upon the plan of the songs of the Bard of Schiraz, in which, we are assured by Fadladeen, 'the same beautiful

**Noctes Ambrosianæ*, II. 370—Blackwood Edition, 1887.

†*Marginalia*, Black's Edition—III. 393.

thought occurs again and again in every possible variety of phrase.' " This is perhaps, a fair comment upon the work of a writer who produced too many books.

Samuel Carter Hall, who knew James well, and who gossips with garrulous freedom about everybody, speaks of him in an admiring way. After observing that very little was known of James's life, he says: "I knew him and esteemed him as an agreeable and kindly gentleman, somewhat handsome in person, and of very pleasant manners. He had the aspect, and indeed the character, that usually marks a man of sedentary occupations. His work all day long, and often into the night, must have been untiring, for he by no means drew exclusively on his fancy; he must have resorted much to books and have been a great reader, not only of English, but of continental histories; and he travelled a good deal in the countries in which the scenes of his historic fictions were principally laid. His novels have always been popular—they are so now, although many competitors for fame, with higher aims and perhaps loftier genius, have of late years supplied the circulating libraries. It was no light thing to run a race with Sir Walter Scott, and not to be altogether beaten out of the field. His great charm was the interest he created in relating a story, but he had masterly skill in delineating character, and in 'chivalric essays' none of his brethren surpassed him."* He gives to James more praise for character-drawing than most of the critics bestow.

Hall quotes from Alison: "There is a constant appeal in his brilliant pages, not only to the pure and generous, but to the elevated and noble sentiments. He is imbued with the very soul of chivalry, and all his

*Hall's Book of Memories, 263.

stories turn on the final triumph of those who are influenced by such feelings. Not a word or a thought which can give pain to the purest heart ever escapes from his pen."

The genial journalist, William Jerdan, in his Autobiography, pays a deserved tribute to James. He says:

"Among the warm friendships to which I may allude, there is not one more sincere, more lasting, or more grateful to my feelings, than that which I have the honour and delight to couple with the admired and estimable name of G. P. R. James. I think it was the production of 'The Ruined City', for private circulation, which first introduced us to each other; and from that hour (I remember the pleasure I received from his volunteering a trial of his skill occasionally in the 'Gazette') I now look back on a quarter of a century upon a close intercourse of minds and hearts without a passing shade to dull its bright and cheering continuity. I need not dwell on those voluminous writings which have placed Mr. James in the foremost rank of our national fictitious literature, nor need I, in his case, illustrate my theme of the uncertainty of literature as a remunerative pursuit—with a private fortune, and the genius which has produced so many admirable works, the author has now fallen back upon a consulate at Norfolk, in America, where, if report speaks truth, he is exposed even to danger in consequence of petty resentment against something he wrote long ago about Slavery!—but, I may say, from nearer and more abundant observation than the world could attain, that the utmost appreciation of his genius must fall short of what is due to his personal worth and nobility of nature. As no author ever excelled him in the purity and rectitude of his publications—every tone of which tends to inspire just moral sentiment, and exalted virtue, and brotherly love, and universal benevolence, and the improvement carrying with it the progress and happiness of his fellow creatures—so no man in private life ever more zealously

practiced the precepts which he taught, and was charitable, liberal, and generous, aye, beyond the measure of cold prudence, and without an atom of selfish reserve. To his fellow-labourers on the oft-ungrateful soil of letters, he was ever indulgent and munificent; and were this the fitting time, I could record acts of his performing that would shed a lustre on any character, however celebrated in merited biographical panegyric. I trust I may state, without compromising the privacy of friendly confidence, that I knew him, as he was ever ready to make sacrifices to friendship, sacrifice half a fortune, legally in his possession, to a mere point of honorable, I might say, romantically honourable feeling, and founded indeed on one of those family romances in which we find fact more extraordinary than fiction; and amongst lesser instances of his general sympathies for all who stood in need of succour, I may mention his procuring me the gratification of handing over £75 to the Literary Fund, as the price received from Messrs. Colburn and Bentley for a manuscript entitled "The String of Pearls."*

I have referred to the remark in *Chambers' Cyclopaedia* about the custom of James to dictate to an amanuensis, a custom he attempted to defend. The writers for this useful work, now rather antiquated, were quite given to the exercise of censorious judgment about authors who did not preserve their popularity. They say of James, however, that he was perhaps the best of the numerous imitators of Scott, and that if he had concentrated his powers on a few congenial subjects or periods of history, and "resorted to the manual labor of penmanship as a drag-chain on the machine, he might have attained to the highest honors of this department of composition. As it is, he has furnished many light,

*Jerdan's Autobiography, iv 210.

agreeable and picturesque books, none of questionable tendency." The Cyclopædia breaks into exclamation points when it chronicles the fact that the original works of Mr. James "extend to one hundred and eighty-nine volumes," and that he edited almost a dozen more. It then quotes from some unnamed critic whom it calls a "lively writer,"* and as I am endeavoring to present the contemporary estimates of James, I venture to reproduce the quotation:

"There seems to be no limit to his ingenuity, his faculty of getting up scenes and incidents, dilemmas, artifices, *contretemps*, battles, skirmishes, disguises, escapes, trials, combats, adventures. He accumulates names, dresses, implements of war and peace, official retinues, and the whole paraphernalia of customs and costumes, with astounding alacrity. He appears to have exhausted every imaginable situation, and to have described every available article of attire on record. What he must have passed through—what triumphs he must have enjoyed—what exigencies he must have experienced—what love he must have suffered—what a grand wardrobe his brain must be! He has made some poetical and dramatic efforts, but this irresistible tendency to pile up circumstantial particulars is fatal to those forms of art which demand intensity of passion. In stately narratives of chivalry and feudal grandeur, precision and reiteration are desirable rather than injurious—as we would have the most perfect accuracy and finish in a picture of ceremonials; and here Mr. James is supreme. One of his court romances is a book of brave sights and heraldic magnificence—it is the next thing to moving at our leisure through some superb and august procession."

*It was R. H. Horne. A New Spirit of the Age (1844) p. 136.

The lively writer has a style which displays the worst faults of the middle nineteenth century, but he is really not far wrong in his conclusions. The Cyclopædia sums up the matter in a sentence which tells the story and signifies that the man wrote too much:

"The sameness of the author's style and characters is, however, too marked to be pleasing."

I timidly venture to suggest that the same thing may be true of Kipling and hope that I may not be annihilated by the bolts of Jupiter for such a daring piece of sacrilege. Having gone so far—but I will refrain from mentioning some other makers of novels with regard to whom the same fable might be narrated.

We may easily understand that the accusation of "sameness" is one which is not very serious when preferred against the author of nearly two hundred volumes. As Allibone says, "he who composes a library is not to be judged by the same standard as he who writes but one book." We must remember that not only Professor Wilson, but Leigh Hunt, about whose taste and discrimination there can be no question, says of him:

"I hail every fresh publication of James, though I half know what he is going to do with his lady, and his gentleman, and his landscape, and his mystery, and his orthodoxy, and his criminal trial. But I am charmed with the new amusement which he brings out of old materials. I look on him as I look on a musician famous for 'variations.' I am grateful for his vein of cheerfulness, for his singularly varied and vivid landscapes, for his power of painting women at once lady-like and loving, (a rare talent,) for making lovers to match, at once beautiful and well-bred, and for the solace which all this has afforded me, sometimes over and over again in illness and in convalescence, when I

required interest without violence, and entertainment at once animated and mild."

Allan Cunningham, in his *Biographical and Critical History of the Literature of the Last Fifty Years* (1833) refers to his excellent taste, extensive knowledge of history, right feeling of the chivalrous, and heroic and ready eye for the picturesque, adding that his propensities are admirable and his sympathy with whatever is high-souled and noble, deep and impressive. Cunningham was on terms of intimacy with him, as a number of letters from James addressed to him abundantly prove. The *Edinburgh Review* estimated highly his abilities as a romance-writer, declaring that his works were lively and interesting, and animated by a spirit of sound and healthy morality in feeling and of natural deliberation in character which should secure for them a calm popularity which would "last beyond the present day."

He was not regarded so favorably by the *London Athenæum*, which said of him: "The first and most obvious contrivance for the attainment of quantity, is, of course, dilution; but this recourse has practically its limit, and Mr. James had reached it long ago. Commonplace in its best day, anything more feeble, vapid—*sloppy* in fact, (for we know not how to characterize this writer's style but by some of its own elegancies)—than Mr. James's manner has become, it were difficult to imagine. Every literary grace has been swamped in the spreading marasmus of his style."*

The bewildered reader of reviews is often at a loss to reconcile the censure of one and the praise of another; and it was not very long before the appearance of this slashing article that the *Dublin University Magazine*

*London Athenæum, April 11, 1846.

had thus expressed its opinions: "His pen is prolific enough to keep the imagination constantly nourished; and of him, more than of any modern writer, it may be said, that he has improved his style by the mere dint of constant and abundant practice. For, although so agreeable a novelist, it must not be forgotten that he stands infinitely higher as an historian. * * * The most fantastic and beautiful coruscations which the skies can exhibit to the eyes of mankind dart as if in play from the huge volumes that roll out from the crater of the volcano. * * * The recreation of an enlarged intellect is ever more valuable than the highest efforts of a confined one. Hence we find in the works before us, lightly as they have been thrown off, the traces of study—the footsteps of a powerful and vigorous understanding."* The works were *Corse de Léon*, *The Ancient Régime*, and *The Jacquerie*—none of them as deserving as *Richelieu*, *Henry Masterton*, or *Mary of Burgundy*. James was a member of the *Dublin* staff and his friend Lever may have inspired the compliments.

One more review may be noticed. Mr. E. P. Whipple, whose criticisms have not become immortal, evidently disapproved of James, and did not hesitate to say so. It is the old charge of sameness and overproduction. Whipple scored James in the *North American Review* of April, 1844.

"He is a most scientific expositor of the fact that a man may be a maker of books without being a maker of thoughts; that he may be the reputed author of a hundred volumes and flood the market with his literary wares, and yet have very few ideas and principles for

**Dublin University Magazine*, March, 1842.

his stock in trade. For the last ten years he has been repeating his own repetitions and echoing his own echoes. His first novel was a shot that went through the target, and he has ever since been assiduously firing through the hole. * * * When a man has little or nothing to say, he should say it in the smallest space. He should not, at any rate, take up more room than suffices for a creative mind. He should not provoke hostility and petulance by the effrontery of his demands upon time and patience. He should let us off with a few volumes, and gain our gratitude for his benevolence, if not our praise for his talents.”*

Whipple's *critiques* are far more obsolete than James's novels; and a good deal of what he says of James is fairly applicable to his own essays. Even Whipple concedes the excellence of *Richelieu*, notwithstanding the fact that it did not emanate from New England.

Back in the forties, there was a magazine, published in Philadelphia, known as *Graham's American Monthly Magazine*, in which the chief American writers of the day, including Poe, Bryant, Cooper, Longfellow, Willis, and Lowell occasionally figured as contributors. It had its page of reviews and in the number of November, 1848, it enlightened its readers with a disquisition on "Vanity Fair"; by W. M. *Thackerway* (*sic*), beginning "This is one of the most striking novels of the season." If Lamb could only have met that reviewer, he surely would have danced about, as on a memorable occasion, singing "diddle, diddle dumpling, my son John" and endeavored to examine the reviewer's bumps. *Graham* (November, 1844) was very severe with poor James, in a notice of *Arrah Neil*. The re-

*Essays and Reviews, ii, 116, 137.

viewer says: "In our opinion, there is hardly an instance on record of an author who has contrived to earn an extensive reputation as a writer of works of imagination, with such slender intellectual materials as Mr. James. No one has ever written so many books, purporting to be novels, with so small a stock of heart, brain, and invention. He is continually infringing his own copyright, by reproducing his own novels. Far from being surprised that he has written so much, we are astonished that he has not written more. From his first novel, all the rest can be logically deduced; and the reason that they have not appeared faster, may be found in the fact that he has been economical in the employment of amanuenses." More of this kind of talk is indulged in without a single word about the book itself or its merits; which proves quite clearly that the reviewer was merely following the path marked out by some other critic, and there is no evidence whatever that he had ever read the work he was reviewing. Thus it is to-day; a parrot-cry of "diffuseness, dilution, re-copying, repetition,"—so easy to proclaim, so difficult to answer, all born of the disposition of newspaper and magazine critics to accept the view which needs no exercise of brains to approve and to announce. It is not without significance that when James was in America, he was a contributor to this same magazine, which had scored him so unmercifully; for example, in the volume for 1851 I find two stories by him—*Christian Lacy*, a *Tale of the Salem Witchcraft*, and *Justinian and Theodora*,—as well as a rather graceful sonnet to Jenny Lind.

James C. Derby mentions the fact that James was a friend of Philip Pendleton Cooke, the Virginian poet, and relates that Thackeray visited James when in the

South, but that James "resented the latter's [Thackeray's] flings at him as a 'solitary horseman', the meaning of which those who have read James's novels will understand. James once told Cooke of his intention to write his own memoirs—a purpose never fulfilled. Incidentally, he told Cooke a story of Washington Irving, his early adviser, who amiably approved of his earliest essays in literature. It seems that James was in Bordeaux, and after strolling all day, returned to his inn. On his way through a long, dark passage he saw some one in front carrying a candle, a man in black slowly ascending the old-fashioned staircase. On the landing the man stopped, and holding up his candle looked at a cat lying on the window-sill, regarding the gazer with a surprised and frightened expression. The stranger in black looked at the cat for some time mutely and then muttered sadly, 'Ah, pussy! pussy! If you had seen as much trouble as I have, you would not be surprised at anything.' After which he went on up the stairs,' said James, 'and as I heard that Irving was in Bordeaux, I said to myself: 'That can be nobody in the world but Irving', which turned out to be a fact.*

Frederick Locker-Lampson visited Walter Savage Landor at Fiesole in the early sixties, and found him reading a Waverly novel. Lampson congratulated the old poet on having so pleasant a companion in his retirement, and Landor, with a winning dignity, replied: "Yes, and there is another novelist whom I equally admire, my old friend [G. P. R.] James."† Locker-Lampson does not seem to have shared Landor's appreciation of James. He says, later in his memoirs: "It is

*Derby's *Fifty Years Among Authors*, etc. 405.

†*My Confidences*, 161.

a law of literature that every generation should be industrious in burying its own, especially novels. What has become of Smollett and Mackenzie—the cockpit of the ‘Thunder’ or the sentimental Harley? Where is the shadowy Mr. G. P. R. James and where is that witty old ghost of the Silver Fork school, Mrs. Gore? * * * Yet they all had vogue.”* It is odd that almost every one, in speaking of James, recites his numerous initials and bestows upon him the title of “Mr,” which carries with it the suggestion of a sneer.

In my small collection of Gladstone letters I find one addressed to James which shows not only that the statesman liked the books but that he and the author were on terms of some intimacy.

“WHITEHALL, May 17, '43.

MY DEAR SIR: I thank you very much for your renewed kindness. The perusal of your last work gave me very great pleasure, most of all (though that is but a very slender testimony in their favour) Evesham and Simon de Montfort, of whom I never had before an adequate conception. It is true I am adopted into the Cabinet, & will I fear be alleged as a proof of its poverty. In point of form I cannot succeed Lord Ripon until the Queen holds a Council.† The true and whole secret of the difficulty about Canada corn (and I do not mean that we can wonder at it) is, as I believe, that wheat, without great abundance, is at 46 / a quarter.

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours faithfully & obliged,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.,
The Shrubbery,
Walmer.

*My Confidences, 533, 534.

†Mr. Gladstone succeeded Lord Ripon as President of the Board of Trade and took his seat in the Cabinet on May 19, 1843.

Donald G. Mitchell, describing the little red cottage of Hawthorne, in the Berkshire hills, reminds us that among those who used to come a-visiting the great American romancer, was "G. P. R. James, that kindly master of knights 'in gay caparison';" and elsewhere says that at the Cooper Memorial meeting in Metropolitan Hall, on February 25, 1852, where Webster, Bryant and Hawks paid their tribute to the author of the Leatherstocking tales, "Mr. G. P. R. James—then chancing to be a visitor in New York,—lent a little of his rambling heroics to the interest of the occasion."* I have before me the *Memorial*, printed by Putnam in 1852, containing a full report of the meeting, including the remarks of James, and I do not find anything which may fairly be called "heroics", rambling or otherwise. The speech was manifestly extemporaneous. He began by expressing his pride in being an Englishman, a romance writer, and a man of the people, and his pleasure in paying an humble tribute to an American romance writer and a man of the people. He praised the addresses of those who preceded him, corrected a trifling error of Bryant's in regard to a Mr. James, a surgeon, and declared that the proposed statue to Cooper was not merely to a novelist, but to a genius—to truth—to truth, genius and patriotism combined. He closed by urging all present to use every exertion to procure contributions for the purpose of erecting such a statue. To any unprejudiced mind, what James said was appropriate and dignified; well suited to the occasion; wholly natural and unaffected; and compared favorably, to say the least, with the dull and ponderous commonplaces of Daniel Webster who had the chair

*American Lands and Letters, II—252.

and who was singularly unfitted to preside over such a meeting. Of Webster's platitudes, Professor Lounsbury is quite contemptuous, remarking that the distinguished orator "had nothing to say and said it wretchedly."* I believe that the projected statue was never built. James was evidently a favorite dinner-speaker. It is pleasant to know that he spoke at a 'printer's banquet' in New York in the latter part of 1850, and that he paid a well-merited tribute to a man destined to become a distinguished figure in literature. Bayard Taylor, writing to his friend George H. Boker, on January 1, 1851, says: "By the bye, James paid me a very elegant compliment, in his speech at the 'printer's banquet' the other night, referring to me as the best landscape painter in words that he had ever known. This is something from an Englishman."† He always said kind and appreciative words about his fellow-authors, if they were deserving.

Returning to the Hawthorne cottage, Julian Hawthorne gives a brief account of one of the visits of James, who, it appears, was living near by during the summer of 1851. As the narrator was five years old at the time of this visit, his estimate of the visitors must have been founded upon something other than his personal observation. He says:

"James was a commonplace, meritorious person, with much blameless and intelligent conversation, but the only thing that recalls him personally to my memory is the fact of his being associated with a furious thunder-storm."

*Life of Cooper, 268.

†Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor, I, 203.

He relates how the storm raged and how the door burst open,—his father and he were alone in the cottage—

“and behold! of all persons in the world—to be heralded by such circumstances—G. P. R. James! Not he only, but close upon his heels his entire family, numerous, orthodox, admirable, and infinitely undesirable to two secluded gentlemen without a wife and mother to help them out. * * * They dripped on the carpet, they were conventional and courteous; we made conversation between us but whenever the thunder rolled, Mrs. James became ghastly pale. Mr. James explained that this was his birthday, and that they were on a pleasure excursion. He conciliated me by anecdotes of a pet magpie, or raven, who stole spoons. At last the thunderstorm and the G. P. R. Jameses passed off together.*

It is not uninteresting to compare this rather patronizing and supercilious narration of a trivial incident with that which is given in his own Journal by the father of this precocious young gentleman of five years; and it is probably the fact that the story was related by the son not from his own memory but from the record of the Journal, reproduced in “Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife,” by Julian Hawthorne.† Nathaniel Hawthorne evidently liked James. Under date of July 30, 1851, he says:

“We walked to the village for the mail, and on our way back we met a wagon in which sat Mr. G. P. R. James, his wife and daughter, who had just left their cards at our house. Here ensued a talk, quite pleas-

*Hawthorne and his Circle, 33, 34.

†Vol. I, 422-423.

ant and friendly. He is certainly an excellent man; and his wife is a plain, good, friendly, kind-hearted woman, and his daughter a nice girl. Mr. James spoke of 'The House of the Seven Gables' and of 'Twice-Told Tales,' and then branched off upon English literature generally."* The acquaintance between the two authors must have been deemed to be of advantage to both, for the supercilious Master Julian takes care to present in full a note of invitation addressed by James to the elder Hawthorne asking the latter 'with his two young people' to visit him, saying: "We are going to have a little haymaking after the olden fashion, and a syllabub under the cow; hoping not to be disturbed by any of your grim old Puritans, as were the poor folks of Merymount. By the way, you do not do yourself justice at all in your preface to the 'Twice-Told Tales,'—but more on that subject anon."†

Under the date of August 9, 1851, Hawthorne gives his own version of the thunderstorm episode, in marked contrast with the condescending remarks of his hopeful son. It reveals the difference between parent and child.

"The rain was pouring down," says Hawthorne senior, "and from all the hillsides mists were steaming up, and Monument Mountain seemed to be enveloped as if in the smoke of a great battle. During one of the heaviest showers of the day there was a succession of thundering knocks at the front door. On opening it, there was a young man on the doorstep, and a carriage at the gate, and Mr. James thrusting his head out of the carriage window, and beseeching shelter from the storm! So here was an invasion. Mr. and Mrs. James, their eldest son, their daughter, their little son Charles,

*Hawthorne and his Wife, I. 415.

†*Id.* 397, 398.

their maid-servant, and their coachman;—not that the coachman came in; and as for the maid, she stayed in the hall.* Dear me! where was Phoebe in this time of need? All taken aback as I was, I made the best of it. Julian helped me somewhat, but not much. Little Charley is a few months younger than he, and between them they at least furnished subject for remark. Mrs. James, luckily, happened to be very much afraid of thunder and lightning; and as these were loud and sharp, she might be considered *hors de combat*. The son, who seemed to be about twenty, and the daughter, of seventeen or eighteen, took the part of saying nothing, which I suppose is the English fashion as regards such striplings. So Mr. James was the only one to whom it was necessary to talk, and we got along tolerably well. He said that this was his birthday, and that he was keeping it by a pleasure excursion, and that therefore the rain was a matter of course.† We talked of periodicals, English and American, and of the Puritans, about whom we agreed pretty well in our opinions; and Mr. James told how he had recently been thrown out of his wagon, and how the horse ran away with Mrs. James; and we talked about green lizards and red ones. And Mr. James told Julian how, when he was a child, he had twelve owls at the same time; and, at another time, a raven, who used to steal silver spoons and money. He also mentioned a squirrel, and several other pets; and Julian laughed most obstreperously. As to little Charles, he was much interested with Bun-ny (who had been returned to us from the Tappans, somewhat the worse for wear), and likewise with the rocking-horse, which luckily happened to be in the sitting-room. He examined the horse most critically, and finally got upon his back, but did not show himself quite as good a rider as Julian. Our old boy hardly said a

*A little bit snobbish for a Hawthorne, is it not?

†Observe how Mr. Julian Hawthorne wholly omits the point of the observation about the pleasure excursion.

word. Finally the shower passed over, and the invaders passed away; and I do hope that on the next occasion of the kind my wife will be there to see.”*

I give the story in full, not only because of its relation to James and his family, but for its revelation of Hawthorne himself; the little touch of parental pride is amusing as well as affecting. What Nathaniel Hawthorne thought of James in those days is far more important than what Julian Hawthorne thinks of him now.

Mr. Charles L. James writes to me:

“Yes, I have read Hawthorne’s account of our visit in a thunderstorm; and what is more, I remember the occurrence. I was little Charley, whom he mentions. I remember not only getting upon Julian’s rocking-horse, but pulling out his tail and being aghast at what I had done, for I did not possess a wooden horse and it had not occurred to me that the tail was movable.”

I am glad that Charles pulled out that tail; perhaps the memory of the outrage inspired the owner of the steed when he wrote his little story.

Longfellow regarded James with a degree of kindness and esteem quite comparable to that with which Hawthorne looked upon him. In his Journal for September 17, 1850, he says, after mentioning several visitors: “Then Fields, with G. P. R. James, the novelist, and his son. He is a sturdy man, fluent and rapid, and looking quite capable of fifty more novels.”† Later, on November 17, he says: “James, the novelist, came out to dinner with Sumner. He is a manly, middle-aged man, *tirant sur le grison*, as Lafontaine has it, with a

*Life of Hawthorne and his Wife, I. 422-424.

†Life of H. W. Longfellow, by Stephen Longfellow, II. 177.

gray mustache; very frank, off-hand, and agreeable. In politics he is a Tory, and very conservative."* James certainly had no reason to complain of his reception by the best of our own literary men of that day.

It is an evidence of the fact that James was admired and his ability appreciated by other authors, that he was suspected by no less a person than William Harrison Ainsworth of being the writer of *Jane Eyre*. I have before me an autograph letter from Ainsworth to James (November 14, 1849), in which he says: "Anything I can do for you at any time you know you may command, and I shall only be too happy in the opportunity of making kindly mention in the N. M. M. of your Dark Scenes of History. The times are not propitious to us veterans and literature generally has within the last two years suffered a tremendous depreciation.

* * * Do you know I took it into my head that you were the author of 'Jane Eyre,' but I have altered my opinions since I read a portion of 'Shirley.' Currer Bell, whoever he or she may be, has certainly got some of your 'trick' * * * but 'Shirley' has again perplexed me."

Robert Louis Stevenson had a modified fondness for James, which is expressed in a letter written by him from Saranac, February, 1888, to E. L. Burlingame. He says:

"Will you send me (from the library) some of the works of my dear old G. P. R. James? With the following especially I desire to make or to renew acquaintance: *The Songster, The Gipsy, The Convict, The Stepmother, The Gentleman of the Old School, The Robber. Excusez du peu.* This sudden return to an

**Id.*, 182.

ancient favourite hangs upon an accident. The Franklin County Library contains two works of his, *The Cavalier* and *Morley Ernstein*. I read the first with indescribable amusement—it was worse than I had feared, and yet somehow engaging; the second (to my surprise) was better than I had dared to hope; a good, honest, dull, interesting tale, with a genuine old-fashioned talent in the invention when not strained, and a genuine old-fashioned feeling for the English language. This experience awoke appetite, and you see I have taken steps to stay it.

R. L. S."

I have a number of holograph letters of James, some of which show his pleasant ways and attractive playfulness. They constitute the *raison d' être* of this commentary and so I will not apologize for giving them almost in full. He speaks for himself far better than I can speak for him. He was surely not a Siborne or a Major Dwyer. To my mind these letters reveal the man, and they tell of an honest, genial man who was able to write.

He writes to C. W. H. Ranken, at Bristol, thus:

RENNES, 16 January, 1826.

RANKENO AMICO CARISSIMO:

That unfortunate Gentleman upon whose back all the evils of this world have been laid from time immemorial, I mean the Devil, has certainly (to give him his due) been tormenting my poor friend and schoolfellow pretty handsomely. What with your cough in the first place and your abscess in the second you have been quite a martyr, but remember the martyrs always reach heaven at last and I doubt not that your sufferings will soon be over and that in the little Paradise you have planned for yourself some five or six miles from London (rather a cockney distance by the by) you will enjoy the happiness of the blest with those you love best. I think I

shall make the same compact with you that I have made with Becknell namely that in after years when time has laid his heavy hand upon us all and when you are happy in your children and your children's children you will still give the crusty old Bachelor a place at your fireside and your Sophia shall furnish me with strong green tea and I will take my pinch of snuff and tell you Graddam's tales to amuse the little ones or recount the wonderful things I have seen in my travels or growl at the degeneracy of the world and praise the good old days when I was young and gay and did many a wondrous deed for "Ladye love and pride of Chivalrie" and you shall forgive many a cross word and ill tempered remark for old friendship's sake and say "He was not always so but this world's sorrows have soured his temper, poor old Man."

You tell me to continue my history of Bretagne, but in sooth I know not where I left off. Memory, that lazy slut, has forgot to mend her pocket which has had a hole in it for some time and the consequence is that, of all I give her to keep for me, the dross alone remains and the better part is dropped by the wayside. But I am not at all in the mood to give any descriptions. I am philosophical and therefore will tell you a story.

In that mighty empire which exceeds all others as much in wisdom as it does in size—in the time of Fo Whang, who was the six hundredth emperor of the ninety-seventh dynasty which has sat on the throne of Cathay, there lived a philosopher whose doctrine was such that every Chinese from the mandarin who enjoys the light of the celestial presence to the waterman who paddles his Junk in the river of Canton became proselytes.

Every one knows that every Chinese from generation to generation is in manners, customs, dress, and appearance so precisely what his father was before him that a certain Mandarin who had thought proper to fall into a trance for a century or so, waking from his sleep and entering his paternal mansion, found his great grandson, who was at dinner, so strikingly like himself that he

was struck dumb with astonishment. There were the same wide thin eye-brows, there were the same beautiful black eyes no bigger than peas, there was the same delicate tea-colored complexion. He wore the same silk his ancestor had worn and the same chopsticks carried his food to his mouth. The Great Grandson instantly recognized his predecessor, but the resuscitated Mandarin, forgetting the lapse of years, mistook his descendant for his own grandfather and each casting themselves on their belly wriggled towards each other with all symptoms of respect. Such being the laudable reverence of this people for all customs sanctified by time, it may be well supposed that that doctrine was magnificent which could take a Chinese by the ear, and such indeed was the doctrine of the Philosopher, namely, that wisdom is folly and folly is wisdom. Which he proved thus: "The end of wisdom" said the Philosopher, "is to be happy. And the fewer are our wants the fewer can be our disappointments and consequently the happier we are. The fool has fewer wants than the wise man and the ignorant less wishes than the learned, and therefore the fool being the happiest is the wisest and the wise man is but a fool." Now the wise men (even in China) being lamentably in the minority the Philosopher had all the voices for himself. Now there was a young Man named To-hi, who never pretended to be a wise man but was nevertheless not a fool, and going to the Philosopher he said to him—"Father, I cannot help thinking that your doctrine means more than it appears to mean and I think I have found its explanation." "Speak freely, my Son" replied the Philosopher, "and tell me what you suppose it to be." "I imagine," said To-hi, "that you wish to inculcate that Men seek for wisdom above their power and destroy their happiness by examining too near the objects which produce it. For I remark that all that is beautiful in nature as well as in life is little better than a delusion which to be enjoyed must be seen from a distance. When I look at the hills of Tartary, they seem from here grand and soft and blue and changing all sorts of colors from the

reflection of the Sun, but when I approach them I find nothing but heaps of barren rocks and frightful deserts. If we regard the finest skin with a magnifying glass, it is like coarsest cloth of Surat and the sunset that we admire for its soft splendor to the nations on the edge of the horizon is but the glare of midday. Thus then we ought to enjoy whatever the world offers us without searching for faults and be as happy as we can without seeking to be too wise. Is not this what you meant?" "My Son," replied the Philosopher "like many other Philosophers I did not well know what I meant and you, like many other commentators, have given an explanation which the author never intended."

Rennes, first of Feby.

As you will see, my Dear Ranken, this letter has been written half a century but I have been wandering about the country and forgot to finish it before I went. Long before this however I hope you are fundamentally cured and prepared to set up on your own bottom. Doubtless you will find a vast fund of nonsense in the former part of this 'pistle but if it serves to give you a minute's amusement it will answer the object of

Yours sincerely

G. P. R. JAMES.

Everybody seems to have written affectionately to Charles Ollier, the publisher—Lamb, Hunt, Keats, Shelley, and a host of others. His son, Edmund, 'beheld Charles Lamb with infantile eyes and sat in poor Mary Lamb's lap.* James writes to the elder Ollier, from the Chateau du Buisson, Garumbourg, *près* Evreux, on August 7, 1829:

"MY DEAR MR. OLLIER.

I take advantage of a friend's departure for London, to write to you though I have nothing to say. I have

*Charles Ollier, 1788-1859.

done so much of my new book as I permit myself to do per diem and having nothing else to do my vile *cacoethes scribendi* prompts me to indite this epistle to your manifest trouble and annoyance. My father informs me you have been ill and calls your complaint 'nothing but Dis-pep-sia.' I hope and trust however that you have no such long word in your stomach, but if you have, nothing can be so good for it as crossing the water and visiting a friend in France. One of my visitors lately brought me over about twenty newspapers and also the information that my unfortunate *Adra* had never made her appearance. Incontinent, I fell into one of my accustomed fits of passion which was greatly increased by finding that in none of the twenty journals was any advertisement or mention whatever of *Richelieu* which together with the news that about four and twenty people had asked for *Richelieu* and could not get it in England, Scotland or Ireland, made me write instantly to Mr. Bentley a very flaming letter about printing *Adra* &c. &c. &c. I had written to Mr. Colburn sometime ago without his doing me the *honor* to answer me, and therefore I write not there again. I have since received an answer from Mr. R. Bentley and all has gone right. But I am most profanely ignorant of all news and therefore will beg you to answer me the following Qys. if you can.

Has *Richelieu* been reviewed in the New Monthly? Has it ever been advertized? Does the sale proceed as successfully as when I left London? Will you see that its first success does not make Mr. Colburn relax in his efforts in its favor? Will you manage the reviewing of *Adra* and take care that it be sent to and noticed by as many publications as possible? Will you see that the list of persons to whom I desired it to be sent and which I left in Burlington street be attended to? Will you let me know whether there be anything in which I can in any way serve or pleasure you? I am sincere and ever yours.

G. P. R. JAMES.

This letter dated at Maxpoffle, near Melrose, Roxburghshire, 14th June 1832, is addressed to Allan Cunningham.

MY DEAR SIR:

When you were in this country last year, I told you not to forget me; and you promised that you would not; yet I doubt not that when you see the signature to this, memory will have much ado to call up the person who writes. Nevertheless I cannot forbear—even at the distance of time which has since elapsed, and the distance of space which intervenes—from telling you how much delighted I have been with your *Maid of Elnar*. I have not seen the whole; but various passages in various reviews, have shown me so much surpassing beauty, that I do not wait even till I have been delighted with the whole, to tell you how great has been the pleasure I have felt from a part.

I do not know very well how or why, but I have been lately sickening of poetry; and though once as great a dreamer as ever felt the sweet music of imagination in his heart of hearts, within the last four or five years I have found it all flat, stale, and unprofitable; and began to fancy myself a devout adorer of dull prose. I thank you then for showing me that there is still such a thing as poetry; and it would not at all surprise me to feel myself—after reading the *Maid of Elnar* through—taking the top of the wave, and going over every poet again from Chaucer to Byron. Can you tell me what it is that causes such a strange revolution in tastes? I declare for the last five years since the Byron mania was upon me, I have looked upon poetry as the most sappy, senseless misapplication of good words, that ever the whimsical folly of the universal fool, mankind, devised. A spark or two of the old faggot was re-kindled in my heart about six weeks ago, by hearing a sonnet of Wordsworth's read aloud; and that I believe induced me to read the extracts from your book; and now I am all ablaze. What I like in the various scattered passages of the *Maid of Elnar*, would be end-

less to tell without writing a review; but there is something throughout the whole which has enchanted me—a mingling of the fine spirit of old chivalry, with the sweet home feeling of calm happy nature that is something newer than even Spenser. As Oliver Cromwell used to say, I would say something—Ay verily—but I won't for fear you should think me exaggerating and therefore I will bid you farewell. It is natural of course for me to hate you; for every author is bound to detest any other person who writes what is good. I would therefore fain pay you that compliment, but your book will not let me; and I must beg you to believe me

Ever yours most truly

G. P. R. JAMES.

I send this to your Bookseller, because I do not know where else to send it; and I pay it, because many a good wholesome letter which has been addressed to the care of mine, has never reached me for want of that precaution on the part of my correspondents. Before the letter reaches you, I shall have got and read the whole book; and by heaven, if the rest does not come up to the extracts, I shall either lampoon you or your critics.

Another letter to Cunningham follows:

MAXPOFFLE NEAR MELROSE ROXBURGHSHIRE

17th May 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

To show you how little the fault that you notice is attributable to myself, I have only to tell you that I could not get a copy of *Mary of Burgundy* till three days after you had received it and my sister in law writes to Mrs. James, by the post that brought your letter, that although she had ordered the book through her own bookseller, she has not yet been able to get it, while friends of hers have obtained it at the circu-

lating libraries. Not having lived in London for many years, I am quite unacquainted with all the ins and outs of these affairs and do not even know who is the Editor of the Athenæum; but I think it somewhat hard measure on his part to make an author pay for the sins of his Bookseller and very different indeed from the usual liberal spirit that I have seen in his paper.

However, I never courted a Journalist in my life and although I know that I have suffered greatly on this account, yet I shall pursue the same plan; and only by endeavoring to make my works better than they have been, force all honest writers to give them their due share whatever it may be. At the same time I will endeavour as far as in me lies to prevent any such instances of neglect as those of which you complain taking place for the future, especially in regard to a paper which deserves so well of the public. Having done so, whatever be the result the Editor must "tak his wull o't, as the cat did o' the haggis." I never reply to criticism unless it be very absurd which is not likely to be the case with his; so let him "pour on, I will endure."

In regard to the *String of Pearls* I not only begged a copy to be sent to you before any one else; I wrote you a long letter to be sent with it; but this is only one out of the many shameful pieces of negligence which Mr. Bentley has shown in my affairs.

I trust that the Editor of the Athenæum got a copy of *Mary of Burgundy* independent of that sent to you for I wish it clearly to be understood that I send you my leather and prunella, as a man for whom I have a high admiration and esteem, and not at all as a critic. When you get them, review them yourself, let others review, praise, abuse them, or let others abuse them as you find need; but still receive them as a mark of regard from me; and be sure that nothing you can say of them will diminish that regard. Whenever I have any one of them for which I wish a little lenity I will write you a note with it and tax your friendship upon the occa-

sion; but still exculpate me in your own generous mind and plead my exculpation to others, of all intriguing to gain undue celebrity for my works or of dabbling with literary coteries. I give in to my bookseller a list of my friends—amongst whom your name stands high and I leave all the rest to him. For the *String of Pearls* I was anxious both because it was given to a charity and because I was afraid the Publisher might lose by it; but this as far as I can remember is the only book for which I ever asked a review.

Thanks however, many thanks, for your critique in the Athenæum which is calculated to do my book much good and is much more favorable than it deserves. Of your light censure I will speak to you when we meet which I am happy to say will be soon—at least I trust soon. On the twenty-eighth we leave this place for London on our way to Germany and Italy. My liver and stomach have become so deranged of late that I find it necessary to put myself under the hands of a physician whose prescription is an agreeable one. "Take the waters of Ems for two seasons and spend the intermediate time in traveling through Italy." This plan I am about to pursue, and in our way we shall spend a month in London when I will find you out.

The country round us is lovely at present. After a cold lingering spring, summer has set in, in all its radiance and the world has burst at once into green beauty. You cannot fancy how lovely the Cheviots looked yesterday evening, as Mrs. James and I rode over the shoulder of the Eildons. The sky was full of the broken fragments of a past thunder storm and the lights and shadows were soft, superb and dreamlike. I know I may rave about beautiful scenery to you without fear or compunction for the Maid of Elnar made me know that you love it as well as

My Dear Allan,

Ever yours truly,

G. P. R. JAMES.

P. S.—I have not yet got your last volume but if it

be as good as its predecessors you will have no occasion to whip your Genius.

He writes again to Cunningham :

10 JULY, 1835.

1 LLOYDS PLACE, BLACKHEATH.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

A thousand thanks for your kind letter and all the kind things it contains. I am glad that you like my friend the Gipsy, because your approval is worth much and though I think it tolerable myself, yet I have attributed a great part of its success to the name. In answer to the question you put, I do not think he was drowned; but I do not know with certainty. I have told all I do know and farther this deponent sayeth not. I have long been thinking of writing to you to tell you that the name of Chaucer appears in the Scroop and Grosvenor roll in the year 1386 but all that I dare say you know. The best sketch of the real events of Chaucer's life is certainly that in Sir H. Nicholas' comments on that roll, Vol. II., page 404, wherein he probably states all that can be learned with certainty of his life and proceedings. I tell you all this, although I dare say you are already acquainted with it because you asked me if I found any thing concerning our poet to let you know. The *Black Prince* comes on but slowly. So much examination and research is necessary that it is a most laborious and very expensive work. It has already cost me in journeys, transcriptions, books, MSS., &c., many hundred pounds without at all calculating my individual labour and do you know, my dear Allan, what I expect as my reward. Clear loss; and two or three reviews written by ignorant blockheads upon a subject they do not understand, for the purpose of damning a work which throws some new light upon English History. I am very much out of spirits in regard to historical literature and though I would willingly devote my time and even my money to elucidate the dark points of our own history yet encouragement from the public is small and

from the Government does not exist, so that I lay down the pen in despair of ever seeing English history any thing but what it is—a farago of falsehoods and hypotheses covered over with the tinsel of specious reasoning from wrong data. And so you tell Lord Melbourne when you see him. But to speak of a personage, you are more likely to see namely Mr. Chantry. There is a bust which I wish him very much to see and wish you would take a look at it first as I have not seen the original myself. I have a cast of it given me by my Banker at Florence, to whom the original belongs, and if the head be equal to the cast it is the most beautiful antique I have ever seen. It is to be seen at Mr. Brown's in University Street, Gower Street *marble works*. Ask to see the antique head belonging to Mr. Johnstone and write me but three lines to tell me what you think of it. He paid, I believe, two hundred pounds for it and would take I believe three or four. If it be as I think, it (pedestal and all) is worth double.

Yours ever with best Compliments to your family

G. P. R. JAMES

Excuse a scrawl but I am not very well.

1 LLOYDS PLACE, BLACKHEATH

5th Decr 1835

MY DEAR ALLAN,—I have sent you a book and have ten times the pleasure in sending you one now that ever I had, because I hear you have detached yourself from all reviews. Heaven be praised therefor; for now you can sit down quietly by your own ingle nook and pick out all that is good—if there be any—in my *One in a Thousand* and palate it all, without the prospect, the damning prospect, of a broad sheet and small print before your eyes, and without wracking your honest brain to find out any small glimmerings of wit and wisdom in your friend's book in order to set it forth as fairly as may be to the carping world.

By the way, I thought you were honest and true; and yet you have deceived me wofully. You promised to come down to Blackheath and you have not appeared.

I have been writing night and day or I should have presented myself to call you to account. Will you come down even yet, and take a family dinner with me? Any Sunday at five you will be sure to find me but if you come on another day, let me have a day's notice by post, lest I be engaged, which would be a great disappointment to

Yours ever truly,

G. P. R. JAMES

He always wrote frankly and freely to Cunningham. This letter deals with *Attila*.

THE COTTAGE, GREAT MARLOW, BUCKS,
15th April 1837

MY DEAR ALLAN,

Many thanks for your letter and kind words upon *Attila*. I do believe that he is a good fellow, at all events he is very successful in society and though there are not as you well know twenty people in London who know who Attila was, he is as well received, I understand, as if he had the entrée. Conjectures as to who Attila was are various in the well *informed circles* of the Metropolis, and ever since the book was advertised two principal opinions have prevailed, some people maintaining that He, Attila, was Platoff; others asserting that he was a Lady, first cousin to Boru the Backswoodsman, and the heroine of a romance by Chateaubriand. This may look like a joke, but I can assure you, it is a fact and that out of one hundred people of the highest rank in Europe you will not find five who know who Attila was; setting aside the groveling animals who, as the Duke of Somerset says, *addict* themselves to Literature.

I am very sorry to hear you say that these well informed and enlightened times have not done justice to your romances. I'll tell you one great fault they have, which is probably that which prevents the world from liking them as much as it should do: they have too much poetry in them, Allan, one and all from *Michael*

Scott to Lord Roldan. But you must not expect to succeed in all walks of art. You are a lyric poet and a biographer; how can you expect that the critics would ever let you come near romances. No, no; they feel it their bounden duty to smother all such efforts of your genius and they fulfil that duty with laudable zeal. Did you see how the *Athenaeum* attempted to dribble its small beer venom upon *Attila*. If you have not, read that sweet and grammatical (*sic*) article, when you will find that because a man has succeeded in one style of writing he cannot succeed in another, and apply the critics dictum to yourself. One half of this world is made up of idiocy, insanity, humbug, and speculation, and the other half (very nearly) of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Yours ever truly

G. P. R. JAMES

This letter is directed to "Charles Ollier, Esq., Richard Bentley, Esq., New Burlington street, London."

FAIR OAK LODGE, PETERSFIELD,
HANTS, 25th December, 1837.

MY DEAR OLLIER:

Mr. Bentley I think usually gives me six copies of a work such as *Louis XIV.* I have already had one copy of the two first volumes for the Duke of Sussex, and you will very much oblige me by having the copies sent to the following persons with my compliments written in the front leaf and dated Fair Oak Lodge, Petersfield. Lord John Russell, Wilton Crescent; S. M. Phillippo, Esq., Home Office; The Marquis Conyngham, Dudley House, Park Lane; The Lady Polwarth, 9 John Street, Berkeley Square; and also one to G. P. R. James, Fair Oak Lodge, which will make the six copies. I must also have another copy sent to my friend Seymour as soon as you can, addressed as follows: "Sir G. Hamilton Seymour, G. C. H. Brussels, In the care of the Under Secretary of State F. O. Downing Street." For this last I will pay as soon as you let me know what is the price. Mr. Bentley charges me for

the copy; I should like it to be accompanied by a copy of *Henry Masterton*, the small edition of which by the [way] I have not received any copies and should like some. Pray let me know what Mr. B. charges *me* for Louis per copy as there are several other friends to whom I should like to give it, but as Sancho would say I must not stretch my feet beyond the length of my sheet.

Yours ever,

G. P. R. JAMES.

P. S. I am anxious to get on with the two last volumes, but I suppose it is the merry season which prevents my having any proofs as yet.

A letter to Alaric Watts refers to the Boundary Question pamphlet:

FAIR OAK LODGE, PETERSFIELD, HANTS,
9th April, 1839.

MY DEAR WATTS,

I write you ten lines in the greatest bustle that ever man was in to tell you that the death of poor Sir Charles Paget turns me out of my house. This is not of necessity indeed, for I have a lease of it for some time yet unexpired, but Lady Paget sent to ask if I would let her come in again and I felt not in my heart to refuse the widow under such circumstances. I go before the first of May, but I do sincerely wish that between this and then I may have the pleasure of seeing you here. I think that you will believe me to be a sincere man; a tolerably bitter enemy as long as I think there is cause for enmity, a very pertinacious friend when I do like. From this place we go to London, or rather to Brompton, Mrs. James's sister who is in town for the winter, having lent her her house there, for a short time. It is called the Hermitage and is nearly opposite Trevor Square, which perhaps you may know. Do not suffer yourself or Mrs. Watts to fancy that it will put us to any inconvenience to receive you here if you can manage it, as I assure you it will not. I sell all my horses by auction on the 25th and you could

help to bid them up. After we quit the Hermitage, we have not the slightest idea where we shall go but there at least I trust to see you if you cannot leave your weighty employments ere then. I was delighted with your parthian shots, which were exquisitely truly aimed and though the arrows were not poisoned by your hand, the corruption of the flesh in which they have stuck, depend upon it, will produce gangrene. You were made for a reviewer: only you are honest. How was it else that I escaped even when we did not fully understand each other?

I have told the booksellers to send you a little pamphlet on the American Boundary question. It is merely a brief and unpretending summary of the early history of that bone of contention, only worth your looking into as a saving of time.

Pray let me hear from you a few words and believe me with Mrs. James's and my own best Compliments to Mrs. Watts.

Yours ever

G. P. R. JAMES

P. S. I am making a little collection of my works in their new edition for Mrs. Watts's book-case and I send *Richelieu* with this. It is odd Bulwer should have just published a play under the same title when the third edition of mine had been announced for months. I have not seen his, but I should like to compare the two.

ALARIC A. WATTS ESQRE

Crane Court

Fleet Street

2 VERULAM PLACE HASTINGS

10th January 1840

MY DEAR ALLAN,

It is very grievous to me to hear that you have been suffering and it would be as grievous to hear *the how* if I were not quite sure that at your age and with temperance in all things such as yours, the enemy—if so we can venture to call him—will pass away and leave

you, perhaps more useful, but not less comfortable for many a long year. Within my own recollection this has happened to many that I still know in health and vigor but while any vestige remains of the disease it always leaves a despondency as its footprint which makes us look upon the attack as worse than it really has been. Though a successful man, I know—I am sure,—you have been an anxious man; and there is nothing has so great a tendency to produce all kind of nervous affections as anxiety. I trust however that you have now no cause for any kind of anxiety but *that* regarding your health, and that it will soon regain its tone. Pray my good friend take exercise, not of a violent or fatiguing nature, but frequent and tranquilly, and remember that anything which hurries the circulation is very detrimental. You will also find everything that sits heavy or cold upon the stomach also bad for you; I know, for I have seen much mischief done by even a small quantity of the cold sorts of fruit. It gives me great pleasure to hear you like my books. You are one of those who can understand and appreciate the plan which I have laid down for myself in writing them. If I chose to hazard thoughts and speculations that might do evil, to run a tilt at virtue and honor, to sport with good feelings and to arouse bad ones, the field being far wider, the materials more ample, I might perhaps be more brilliant and witty, but I would rather build a greek temple or a gothic church than the palace of Versailles with all its frog's statues and marbles. If the books give you entertainment, you are soon likely to have another for there is one now in the press called the "*King's Highway*" but which is not quite so Jack Sheppardish as the name implies. With our best regards to all yours believe me ever

Yours truly

G. P. R. JAMES

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM ESQRE

Belgrave Place

Pimlico

I do not know to whom this letter was written.

HOTEL DE L'EUROPE, BRUSSELS,
30th July, '40.

MY DEAR SIR,

The grief and anxiety I have suffered have brought upon me an intermittent fever and various concomitant evils amongst which has been an affection of the face and eyes. Had this not been the case I should have written to you ere I left England, although it has cost me a great effort to write to any one. I am now a good deal better and will immediately correct the proofs I have received; but for the future will you tell Mr. Shaw to send the proofs in as large a mass as possible, addressed as follows and given in to the French diligence office, à Monsieur G. P. James chez M: C. A. Fries, Heidelberg en Basle, *aux soins de* Messrs. Eschenauer Cie, Strasburg, Via Paris, *Pressé*.

This is a somewhat long address, but if it be not followed and the proofs be sent by Rotterdam I shall never get one half of them till two or three years after, for such was the case with many proofs of *Edwd. the Black Prince*.

Any letter for me you had better direct at once to me "*aux soins de* Sir G. Hamilton Seymour, G. C. H. Brussels." When I am a little better I will write you a longer letter telling you all our movements and also what progress I have made in my plan for stopping continental piracy; in which if you will give me your assistance and influence I do not despair of succeeding although the Government will do nothing. I have already made some way for I can talk without using my eyes.

Yours ever faithfully

G. P. R. JAMES.

This letter was written to McGlashan, in Lever's care, at Brussels:

THE SHRUBBERY, WALMER,
2nd August, 41.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I did not write to you as I had full occupation for every minute and of a kind that could not be neglected. The same will be the case for the next three weeks, as I am just concluding a new work which I can of course lay aside for no other undertaking till it is finished. It will give me very great pleasure to see you here on your way back from Brussels and we can talk over the whole of my plan but as to having even one number completed that is quite out of the question as in order to accomplish it I should be obliged to lay aside a work which had reached the beginning of the last volume before you made up your mind and to do so would be highly disadvantageous to both books. I can tell you quite sufficient however regarding the first two numbers to answer your views as to illustrations.

Pray give my best wishes to Dr. Lever and tell him that we are all going on well; though for the last fortnight I have had no small anxiety upon my shoulders regarding Mrs. James and the baby.

Believe me to be

Dear Sir

Yours faithfully

G. P. R. JAMES.

On May 17, 1842, he wrote to Mr. Bretton:

“* * * I am very glad you were pleased with what I said at the Literary Fund dinner. I could have said a great deal more upon the same subject and opened my views for the benefit of the arts in this country, including literature of course, as one of the noblest branches of art—but the hour was so late that I made my speech as short as possible and yet perhaps it was too long. * * * I think if I can bring the great body of literary men to act with me, especially the much neglected and highly deserving writers for the daily and weekly press, I shall be enabled to open a new prospect

for literature. Should you have any opportunity (*sic*) of hinting that such are my wishes and hopes, pray do: for this is no transient idea, but a fixed and long meditated purpose which, however inadequate may be my own powers to carry it out, may produce great things by the aid of more powerful minds than that of

Yours very faithfully

G. P. R. JAMES.

The name of the person to whom the following letter was written is not given:

THE OAKS NR. WALMER KENT

22ND AUGT. 1844

SIR:

I have been either absent from home or unwell since your letter arrived or I should have answered it sooner. I do not exactly understand the sort of use you desire to make of the *Life of Edward the Black Prince* written by myself. Of course I can have no possible objection to your making as long quotations from it as you like, or to your grounding your own statements upon those which it contains which I think you may rely upon with full confidence; but if it was your purpose to make the projected Work a mere sort of Abridgement of mine, I am sorry to say I cannot give you the permission you desire, however much I might personally wish to do so, as Messrs. Longman published a Second Edition of it not long ago, a part of which remains unsold and I could not venture, of course to interfere with their sale. They could not of course object to any quotations you might think fit to make or any reasonable use of the facts stated, as I cannot but think that each historian has a full right to employ the information collected by all his predecessors.

I have the honor to be,

Sir

Your most obedt. Servant

G. P. R. JAMES

THE SHRUBBERY WALMER KENT

1ST JUNE 1847

MY DEAR WORTHINGTON,

I received your letter yesterday and would have answered it immediately; but we are in the midst of an election business here. I am not a candidate; and, disgusted with public men, had resolved not to take any part on behalf of others; but I have been led on and when once in the business go on, as you know, heart and hand.

Let me hear a little more about the Ecclesiastical History Society. I am a churchman you know, but far from Puseyitical and I should not like to be mixed up with any legends except such as Ehrenstein or any Saints except St. Mary le bonne.

I am glad to hear that you have moved your dwelling; for Pancras was so completely out of my beat that it was impossible for me to get there when in town. Indeed during my visits to that famed city of London I always put myself in mind of an American orator's description of himself when he said "I am a right down regler Steam Engine, I go slick off right ahead and never stop till I get to the tarnation back of nothing at all."

I shall be delighted to see you and Mr. Christmas here any time you can come and will with a great deal of pleasure board and educate you but as to lodging you I am unable for what with babies, nurses, and one thing or another I can hardly lodge myself. I do not propose to be in London for some days or I should rather say weeks, as I was there very lately.

As to Marylebone, any body may propose me for any where and I will be the representative of any body of men always provided nevertheless that I do not spend a penny and maintain my own principles to the end of the chapter. I am not yet inscribable in the *dictionnaire des Girouettes*; but I trust soon to be for it seems to me

that the Jim Crow system is the only one that succeeds in England.

Believe me with best regards to all your household
Yours truly

G. P. R. JAMES

In a letter dated April 1, 1849, and addressed to Mr. Davison, he says :

"I understand you have got a potato. Can you spare half of it, for we have not that. But to speak seriously, which is not my wont, Mrs. James has heard from Mrs. H. that on your farm there are some capital praties, and as we have been languishing for some of the jewels for the last month without being able to get anything edible or digestible, if this rumor of your *riches* is correct, will you spare a sack or two to a poor man in want, and what will be the cost of the same, delivered in Farnham safe, sound and in good condition—wind and weather permitting. The truth is I have no horse to send for them; and neither cow nor calf have learned to draw yet. I have had no time to teach them, or to buy a horse either. I wish any one else had half my work and I half of theirs—I'd take it and give a premium."

How busy he was after his arrival in America may be seen from a letter dated October 27, 1850:

"I fear that it would be quite impossible for me to rewrite the first four numbers of the tale you speak of. Applications for lectures have come in so rapidly that I have not one single evening vacant and the evening would be the only time which I could devote to such a purpose as all my mornings must be given up to the fulfilment of my engagements with England and to traveling from place to place. You may easily imagine how much I am occupied when I tell you that during the whole month I am about to stay in Boston, there is not one night which has not its lecture fixed there or at some place in the neighborhood. The delay in London

however, of which I had not heard till I received your letters is favorable, as it will enable me to get the proofs over in good time. The four parts are in type, I understand, and I have written over two thumping letters to the printers scolding them for not sending the proof as they are bound by contract to do. One of these letters was posted three weeks ago, so that we may expect the proofs in a week or ten days. In regard to the name, it is certainly curious that one name should have been taken three times but I do not see how it is possible for me to alter it now when it is announced in London. I was not at all aware that any work had before appeared under a similar title, but you could head it *James's* story without a name in the Magazine, but if any other title is given it must be by yourselves and not by

"Yours faithfully,

"G. P. R. JAMES."

Soon after his arrival in America he appears to have become involved in some trouble with publishers. He writes from New York on October 24, 1850, to Ollier:

* * * "Send no more sheets to Mr. Law till you hear from me again. My eyes have been opened since my arrival her. Four times the sum now paid can be obtained from Messrs. Harper, and negotiations are going on with them in which they must not have the advantage of having the sheets. You shall not lose by any new arrangement—of that you may trust to the word of one who has I think never failed you."

He adds, in a postscript: "Tell him [Mr. Newby] I have been shamefully imposed upon by false statements of the sale here and if I had taken his advice I should have been some hundreds of pounds richer."

On October 5, 1851, he writes from Stockbridge to Ollier:

"I have not written to you earlier because I wanted

to find the treaty with Russia in regard to Copyright, and also to see the head of a great German house here in America so as to put you in the way of negotiating for the sale of my next book in Germany. But I have been too lame to leave my own house for anything but a morning drive. I am so far better that I can now walk out for a mile or two, but my right hand and arm remain very painful. However, I think I shall be able to go to New York in ten days and will write to you from that place. * * * I am anxious to dedicate the first book I write to my own satisfaction, to Lord Charles Clinton. He is one of the noblest-minded men I ever met with—all truth and honor and straightforwardness. If you see him will you ask him for me whether he has any objection. The Fate is highly popular here—considered the best book I ever wrote—by the critics at least. The whole of the first chapter was read in the Supreme Court the other day before Chief Justice SHAW to prove what was the state of England in the reign of James II. So says the ‘N. Y. Evening Post’ and I suppose it is true. I wish I had you here with me to see the splendor of an American autumn in the most lovely scene. The landscape is all on fire with the coloring of the foliage and yet so harmoniously blended are the tints, from the brightest crimson to the deep green of the pines that the effect is that of a continuous sunset. Mountains, forests, lakes, streams are all in a glow round.”

A letter to Ollier, written at Stockbridge on March 22, 1852, deals with some financial matters and then proceeds:

“I am glad to hear what you say of *Revenge*—though the title is not one I would myself have chosen, there being a tale of that name in the book of the Passions. I think it is a good book, better in conception than in execution perhaps. Your comparison of Richardson and Johnson with myself and you will not hold. You

are scantily remunerated for much trouble. Johnson had done nothing that I can remember for Richardson. As to Richardson's parsimony towards the great, good man, you explain it all in one word. The former was rich. Do you remember the fine poem of Gaffer Grey—Holcroft's I believe—

'The poor man alone,
To the poor man's moan,
Of his morsel a morsel will give Gaffer Grey.'

"But this rule is not without splendid exceptions, of which I will one day give you an instance, which I think will touch you much. At present I am writing in great haste in the grey of the morning with snow all around me, the thermometer at 18, and my hand nearly frozen. Verily, we have here to pay for the hot summer and gorgeous autumn in the cold silver coinage of winter."

Another letter of his written from Winchester, Virginia, November 6, 1853, to Ollier, has some interest. He writes thus:

"MY DEAR OLLIER: Long before the arrival of your kind letter, which reached me only two days ago, I had directed Messrs. Harper to send me a revise of the first page of *Ticonderoga*, in order to transmit it to you for the correction of errors which had crept into the Ms. through the stupidity of the drunken beast who wrote it under my dictation. Harpers have never sent the revise, but I think it better to write at once in order to have one correction and one alteration made, which must be effected even at the cost of a cancel of the page—which of course I will pay for. The very first sentence should have inverted commas before it. These have been omitted in the copy left here, as well as the words 'so he wrote' or something tantamount, inserted at the end of the first clause of that sentence. * *

* I cannot feel that an appointment of any small

value, to the dearest and most unhealthy city in the United States (with the exception of New Orleans) is altogether what I had a right to hope for or expect. You must recollect that I never asked for the consulate of Virginia, where there is neither society for my family, resources or companionship for myself, nor education to be procured for my little boy—where I am surrounded by swamps and marsh miasma, eaten up by mosquitoes and black flies, and baked under an atmosphere of molten brass, with the thermometer in the shade at 103—where every article of first necessity, with the exception of meat, is sixty per cent. dearer than in London—where the only literature is the ledger, and the arts only illustrated in the slave market.

I hesitated for weeks ere I accepted; and only did so at length upon the assurances given that this was to be a step to something better, and upon the conviction that I was killing myself by excessive literary labors. Forgive me for speaking somewhat bitterly; but I feel I have not been well used. You have known me more than thirty years, and during that time I do not think you ever before heard a complaint issue from my lips. I am not a habitual grumbler; but 'the galled jade will wince.'

I am very grateful to Scott for his kind efforts, and perhaps they may be successful; for Lord Clarendon, who is I believe a perfect gentleman himself, when he comes to consider the society in which I have been accustomed to move, my character, my habits of thought, and the sort of place which Norfolk is—if he knows anything about it—must see that I am not in my proper position there. He has no cause of enmity or ill-will towards me, and my worst enemy could not wish me a more unpleasant position. If I thought that I was serving my country there better than I could elsewhere, I would remain without asking for a change; but the exact reverse is the case. The slave dealers have got up a sort of outcry against me—I believe because under Lord Clarendon's own orders I have successfully prosecuted several cases of kidnapping negroes from the West In-

dies—and the consequence is that not a fortnight passes but an attempt is made to burn my house down. The respectable inhabitants of Norfolk are indignant at this treatment of a stranger, and the authorities have offered a reward of three hundred dollars for the apprehension of the offenders; but nothing has proved successful. This outcry is altogether unjust and unreasonable; for I have been perfectly silent upon the question of slavery since I have been here, judging that I had no business to meddle with the institutions of a foreign country in any way. But I will not suffer any men, when I can prevent or punish it, to reduce to slavery British subjects without chastisement.

You will be sorry to hear that this last year in Norfolk has been very injurious to my health; and I am just now recovering from a sharp attack of the fever and ague peculiar to this climate. It seized me just as I set out for the West—the great, the extraordinary West. Quinine had no effect upon it, but I learned a remedy in Wisconsin which has cured the disease entirely though I am still very weak. * * *

He seems to have been tormented by ill health during all his period of residence at Norfolk. He writes to Ollier:

BRITISH CONSULATE, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA,
7th April, 1855.

MY DEAR OLLIER:—It has been impossible for me to write to you and it is now only possible for me to write a few lines as I have already had to do more than my tormented and feeble hands could well accomplish. For 10 weeks I was nailed to my chair with rheumatic gout in knees, feet, hips, hands, shoulder. For some time I could only sign my dispatches with my left hand and to some letters put my mark. Happily my feet, knees, &c., are well, but I cannot get the enemy out of my hands and arms. My shoulder is Sebastapol and will not yield.

Another letter, also in my possession, I have caused to be printed elsewhere. It is addressed to Ollier, and was written from Farnham, Surrey, on July 26, 1848.

My dear Ollier: I do not suppose that I shall be in town for a few days, and I think in the meantime it would be better to send me down the sheets with any observations you may have to make. I shall be very happy to cut, carve, alter and amend to the best of my ability. The 'sum' can only be described as 'Heaven, Hell and Earth', or if you like it better, 'upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber.' But I suppose neither of these descriptions would be very attractive and therefore perhaps you had better put 'The Sky, the hall of Eblis, South Asia'. When it maketh its appearance you had better for your own sake take care of the reviewing; for I cannot help thinking that with the critics at least, my name attached to it is likely to do it more harm than good, unless friendly hands undertake the reviewing. The literary world always puts me in mind of the account which naturalists give of the birds called Puffs and Rees which alight in great bodies upon high downs and then each bird forms a little circle in which he runs round and round. As long as each continues this healthful exercise on the spot he has first chosen, all goes on quietly; but the moment any one ventures out of his own circle, all the rest fall upon him and very often a general battle ensues. I wish you could do anything for my book *Gowrie or the King's Plot*. I had a good deal of money embarked in it.

Yours faithfully,

G. P. R. JAMES.

My letter of latest date indicates the time when he was transferred to Richmond.

BRITISH CONSULATE, NORFOLK, VA.

3 May, 1856.

MY DEAR MR. KENNEDY: * * * Lord Clarendon has ordered me to make every preparation for

moving the Consulate of Virginia up to Richmond but not to do so until he has nominated a Vice Consul for Norfolk. He also wishes me to send him a detailed report regarding the late epidemic here and what between house hunting, office hunting, and trying to run down those foxes called rumors into their holes and to draw truth up from the bottom of her well in a place where people are as fanatical upon contagion and non-contagion as if they were articles of faith, I have had no peace of my life. My book I would have sent you but I could not get a copy worth sending. It has found favor in the South and is powerfully abused in the North, both which circumstances tend to increase the sale so that it has been wonderfully well read. * *

* I am sorry I did not think of taking notes of all the winning conversations at Berkeley. We might have made out together some few from the *Noctes Berkeli-anae*.

Yours ever,

G. P. R. JAMES.

I was interested not long ago in a remark of the accomplished literary reviewer of the *Providence Journal* about reading for boys. He said: "As a matter of fact, there is plenty of good, healthy reading for boys if parents and teachers would do more to bring it to their attention. To say nothing of Scott—whom some degenerate youngsters in these days profess to find stupid—there are Ainsworth, G. P. R. James, Mayne Reid and hosts of others who can tell stories of adventure that any healthy minded boy will enjoy." I know well the sound and refined judgments of my Providence friend,—who castigated me once for my opinion that Cowper was not much read in these times—but I do not understand how he can imagine a boy of the twentieth century condescending to read Ainsworth or James. First and foremost, the novels are too long. The con-

ventional three volumes demanded by the English public are revolting to the minds of the modern boys who want their fiction condensed and flavored with tabasco sauce. The Providence critic and I know—or think we know—what they ought to read, what would be good for their intellectual digestion; but we might as well offer them pre-digested tablets in lieu of chocolate creams. The young person will not now subsist on a diet of Ainsworth or of James. The long-spun dialogue would bore him. He calls for something more piquant; revels in slang; wants “sensation” and plenty of it, compressed in a small compass. As for the parents, they do not know much better themselves. The man of Providence well says: “The trouble is, as was pointed out in these columns recently in discussing the reading of girls, that the home atmosphere is all against any intelligent selection of books.” The prevalent antagonism to all that is called “old-fashioned” is not limited to the young people, and the novels of James are, in comparison with the novels of to-day as old-fashioned as are the plays of Massinger in comparison with those of Bernard Shaw.

James has been compared to Dumas, and there are many things in common between the two authors—their voluminous publications, their bent towards the historical, and their use of an amanuensis. A critic, not very well disposed towards James, says in regard to this comparison, “both had a certain gift of separating from the picturesque parts of history what could without difficulty be worked up into picturesque fiction, and both were possessed of a ready pen. Here, however, the likeness ends. Of purely literary talent, James had little. His plots are poor, his descriptions weak, his dialogue often below even a fair average, and he was de-

plorably prone to repeat himself."* This harsh judgment appears to me to be far too severe. His descriptions are not weak, and he surely had an advantage over Dumas in the matter of decency and morality.

But the most ardent admirers of this hard-working and conscientious toiler in the fields of literature must own that in all his multitudinous pages he has not given to the world a single character which has endured in the popular mind, and the Podsnap virtue of having written no word which could bring a blush to the cheek of the young person, cannot remedy this flaw in his title. Writers who rival him in productiveness but who are in respects inferior to him, have nevertheless secured a more permanent place in the hall of fame, because they have been able to give to some of their personages a real and distinctive life. Leather-Stocking and Long Tom Coffin shine forth from the many wearisome chapters of Fenimore Cooper, Count Fosco and Captain Wragge from the ephemeral volumes of Wilkie Collins, and Mrs. Proudie from the placid chronicles of Anthony Trollope, but they have no kinsmen in the works of James. Even in the historical stories no individual stands forth like Louis XI. in *Quentin Durward* or Rienzi in Bulwer's stirring tale. Nor has he left to posterity any brilliant *tour de force* like the "Dick Turpin's Ride" of Harrison Ainsworth.

Whatever may be said of the diffuseness and 'sameness of the stories, of their want of definite plan, their lack of strength in the development of the characters who throng their pages, and the evidence they afford of hasty composition, it must be admitted that they are

*Encyclopædia Britannica, XIII. 561 (Ninth Edition).

clean and dignified in tone and that they display a wonderful acquaintance with history as well as a faithful and conscientious use of materials gathered with infinite pains and laborious research. These qualities, however, are not those which ensure literary immortality; and while it is possible that the best of the books may find from time to time readers incited to peruse them by a certain curiosity, and while the lovers of good stories may enjoy them, it is not likely that they will ever rank with the novels of Scott, of Thackeray, of Dickens, or even of Marryat and Lever, although they may occupy a place on the shelves of our libraries by the side of the old romances of the period of *Amadis de Gaul* or the forgotten tales of the younger Crébillon.

APPENDIX

A LIST OF THE WORKS OF G. P. R. JAMES

It is difficult to give an accurate list of James's books with the dates of their publication. The one given by Allibone is the most complete, but it is not always correct. The catalogue of the British Museum enumerates sixty-seven novels. The following does not include merely edited works or those prepared in collaboration with others, with a few exceptions. Those marked with an asterisk are reprinted in the collected edition of 1844-1849. I was much helped not only in correcting the Allibone list, but in the preparation of the sketch of James, by the late G. H. Sass of Charleston, S. C., who was probably better informed about the subject than any one else in this country.

Life of Edward the Black Prince: 2 vols: 1822.
[Some accounts give 1836: See *ante*, page 136.]

The Ruined City: a poem.

Richelieu: 3 vols: 1829.

*Darnley: 3 vols: 1830.

*Del'Orme: 3 vols: 1830.

*Philip Augustus: 3 vols: 1831.

Memoirs of Great Commanders: 3 vols: 1832.

*Henry Masterton: 3 vols: 1832.

History of Charlemagne. 1832.

*Mary of Burgundy: 3 vols: 1833.

*Delaware: 3 vols: 1833: (reprinted under title of

"Thirty Years Since," 1848).

*John Marston Hall: 3 vols: 1834: (reprinted under title of "The Little Ball o' Fire," 1847).

*One in a Thousand: 3 vols: 1835.

*The Gipsy: 3 vols: 1835.

Educational Institutions of Germany: 1836.

Lives of the Most Eminent Foreign Statesman: 5 vols: (4 by James, 1836, [1832?] 1838.

Attila: 3 vols: 1837.

Memoirs of Celebrated Women: 3 vols. (?) 1837.

*The Robber: 3 vols: 1838.

Book of the Passions: 1838.

History of Louis XIV. 4 vols: 1838.

*The Huguenot: 3 vols: 1838.

Blanche of Navarre: a play: 1839.

Charles Tyrrell: 2 vols: 1839.

*The Gentleman of the Old School: 3 vols: 1839.

*Henry of Guise: 3 vols: 1839.

History of the United States Boundary Question: 1839.

*The King's Highway: 3 vols.: 1840.

The Man at Arms: 3 vols.: 1840.

Rose d'Albret: 3 vols.: 1840.

The Jacquerie: 3 vols.: 1841.

The Vernon Letters: 3 vols.: (edited). 1841.

*Castlneau; or the Ancient Régime: 3 vols.: 1841.

*The Brigand; or Corse de Leon: 3 vols.: 1841.

Corn Laws.

History of Richard Cœur de Lion: 4 vols.: 1841-42.

Commissioner; or De Lunatico Inquirendo: 1842.

*Morley Ernstein: 3 vols.: 1842.

Eva St. Clair, and Other Tales: 2 vols.: 1843.

The False Heir: 3 vols.: 1843.

*Forest Days: 3 vols.: 1843.

- History of Chivalry: 1843.
 *Arabella Stuart: 3 vols.: 1843.
 *Agincourt: 3 vols.: 1844.
 Arrah Neil: 3 vols.: 1845.
 The Smuggler: 3 vols.: 1845.
 Heidelberg: 3 vols.: 1846.
 The Stepmother: 3 vols.: 1846.
 Whim and its Consequences: 3 vols.: 1847.
 Margaret Graham: 2 vols.: 1847.
 The Last of the Fairies: 1847.
 The Castle of Ehrenstein: 3 vols.: 1847.
 The Woodman: 3 vols.: 1847.
 The Convict: 3 vols.: 1847.
 Life of Henry IV. of France: 3 vols.: 1847.
 Russell: 3 vols.: 1847.
 Sir Theodore Broughton: 3 vols.: 1847.
 Beauchamp: 3 vols.: 1848.
 Carmazalaman; a Fairy Drama: 1848.
 The Fight of the Fiddlers: 1848.
 Forgery; or Best Intentions: 3 vols.: 1848.
 *Gowrie; or the King's Plot: 1848.
 Dark Scenes of History: 3 vols.: 1849.
 John Jones' Tales from English History: 2 vols.:
 1849.
 A String of Pearls: 2 vols.: 1849. [His first written
 book; published 1833 (?); Allibone assigns its publi-
 cation to 1849].
 Ireland's "David Rizzio": 1849: (edited).
 Heathfield's "Means of Relief from Taxation":
 1849: (edited).
 Henry Smeaton: 3 vols.: 1850.
 The Fate: 3 vols.: 1851.
 Revenge: (sometimes called A Story Without a
 Name): 3 vols.: 1851.

Pequinillo: 3 vols.: 1852.

Adrian; or the Clouds of the Mind: (jointly with M. B. Field): 2 vols.: 1852.

Agnes Sorel: 3 vols.: 1853.

Ticonderoga; or the Black Eagle: 3 vols.: 1854.

Prince Life: 1855.

The Old Dominion; or the Southampton Massacre:
3 vols.: 1856.

Lord Montagu's Page: 1858.

The Cavalier: (Bernard March?): 1859.

Adra; or the Peruvians: a poem: (*circa*, 1829).

The City of the Silent: a poem.

The Desultory Man: 3 vols.

Life of Vicissitudes.

My Aunt Pontypool: 3 vols.

The Old Oak Chest: 3 vols.

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